Dec 2002
LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE
777 GARNER RD.E.
ANCASTER, ON L9K 1J4

CHRISTIAN COURIER
June 3, 2002 A Reformed Biweekly No.2691 $1.60

Conversing about conversion ..... p. 10

One dress, two shoes ..... p. 12

57th year of publication

Many challenges facing church in East Africa

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
JUN 0 3 2002

Alan Doerksen

FORT ERIE, Ont. — Christians in East Africa are facing significant challenges, such as poverty, poor transportation, and social problems caused by AIDS. But according to two Christian leaders from Kenya, God is equipping the church to face these challenges, and Christians in North America are coming alongside to help out.

Bishop Silas Owiti is the founder of Voice of Salvation Ministries (VSM), one of the oldest and largest indigenous church-planting movements in East Africa. In Kenya, there are now about 1,000 VSM churches, and a total of nearly 2,500 affiliated churches in East Africa. Owiti's wife, Winnie, manages the Ebenezer Life Centre, which includes an orphanage and rehabilitation program for many homeless street children in Kenya.

In early May, the Owitis visited Canada to talk about their ministry with Canadian supporters, who are linked to the Owitis' work through Christian Aid Mission (CAM). In an interview with *Christian Courier* at CAM's Canadian office, in Fort Erie, Ont., the Owitis outlined some of the challenges facing the church in East Africa, and how their ministry is helping to address some of these.

COURTESY BISHOP SILAS AND WINNIE OWITI, AND CHRISTIAN AID MISSION

Bishop Silas Owiti preaches in East Africa.

Pastor's lives threatened

Transportation is a big challenge in East Africa — especially in Tanzania, explains Bishop Owiti. "The means of transportation in Tanzania are very scarce," he explains. "Tanzania is much poorer than Kenya." Preachers often "use a bus ... between this city and that city, but it takes almost a week." VSM preachers sometimes have to walk or bicycle between cities, "and they even don't know where they're going to sleep," says Owiti. Accommodations and food are hard to find in the wild countryside between cities.

Owiti tells of two traveling VSM pastors who faced a life-threatening situation while walking between two cities. "They walked, and the night caught up with them. They spotted a little hut in the bush, so they decided, 'Let's go in and sleep there.'" Having no flashlights, they simply went in, "spread their blankets on the floor and slept, not knowing that a leopard had given birth in the corner of that building. At about midnight, suddenly the mother leopard came in and smelled human beings in the building. The leopard ... began to roar. They woke up, and one of them said, 'Brother, we are dying.' The other one said, 'Let us call on Jesus,' so they prayed quietly. And they said, 'Leopard, we are sorry to disturb you. We are just preachers.... Please do not kill us. We are very innocent.'"

The leopard looked at them, walked by, and started nursing its babies. Incredibly, the pastors went back to sleep and awoke safely in the morning. As they prepared to leave, "They said, 'Lord, we want to thank you for protecting us from this leopard.'... Both of these preachers are still alive," Owiti asserts. "We thank God, who delivered Daniel from the lion's den — he's still our God."

Better buildings needed

Another challenge faced by the East African church is finding the funds needed to pay for long-lasting church buildings, and to buy land on which to build them. "Our old churches could only [last] five years, and then they start falling because they're made of grass and mud. The weather is very hard on them.... Such buildings are not very good anymore," explains

See **CHURCHES** *page 2...*

China's extreme cults bring confusion, persecution of house churches

Xu Mei

China (Compass) — In late April, reports filtered out from China that about 100 leaders of the evangelical China Gospel Fellowship — a major house church grouping that claims some four million members — had been arrested by the police. Soon after, contradictory but more reliable reports said these key leaders had almost certainly been kidnapped by the sinister Lightning from the East (LFE) cult in a carefully orchestrated strategy.

Confusing situation

This bizarre event shows how confusing the situation can be for Chinese Christians — and even more so for overseas observers.

Some Western Christians who tend to always place blame on the Chinese authorities were brought up short. As the Chinese government's crackdown on cults continues and reports of both cultic activity and of persecution of genuine house church believers continue to emerge, it is necessary to stand back, take stock, and analyze the entire situation.

Reality of cults in China

The vast revival of religion since the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) has spawned a bewildering variety of sects, cults and new religions. Maoist ideology has failed to satisfy Chinese spiritual aspirations. The void has filled with a plethora of religious sects, which the government has growing difficulty in categorizing.

If some 70 per cent of the population are peasants, then more than 800 million people are living in semi-literacy and poverty, prone to superstition, witchcraft and magic.

BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO BY ROY M. BURROUGHS

In China, a country of 1.3 billion people, there are large cities with only a handful of local Christians and no concerted Christian witness.

The five religions tolerated by the authorities — Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism — are like icebergs floating in a murky ocean that conceals depths of folk-religion, bizarre cults and outright fanaticism. Witches and shamans beat the spirits out of possessed or mentally ill patients. People die because of exorcisms and false promises of faith healing.

In late 1998, members of the pseudo-Christian cult Lightning from the East "armed with daggers, steel bars, and powdered lime lured their victims out of their villages under the pretext of praying for the relief of illness, but disfigured their victims, breaking their legs and cutting off their ears," a May 2000 Tianfeng article stated. LFE's belief that Christ has returned as a Chinese woman living in Henan province is completely

See **CHRISTIANS** *page 3...*

News

Churches help out orphans, street children in East Africa

PHOTOS COURTESY BISHOP SILAS AND WINNIE OWITI, AND CHRISTIAN AID MISSION

Pastors with bicycles: Transportation is a serious obstacle for church leaders in East Africa.

... continued from page 1

Winnie Owiti. "We are caught up in this problem in that we have over 800 churches that need church buildings. Each one of them would cost nothing less than $4,000 (U.S.)."

VSM's headquarters has been helping raise money to build new church structures, and CAM has provided financial help to VSM since the early 1970s, when the agency first heard about VSM's work, says Winnie. "Through Christian Aid, I would say that the work of God and our ministry have grown tremendously," she asserts. "We've been able to support more than 250 full-time ministers. The little moneys we get from our offerings cannot support a minister....

"Christian Aid has been a real instrument in trying to identify viable groups or ministries that can be given a hand and in time produce more for the Kingdom of God."

Winnie notes that some East African Christians have donated land for churches to be built on, and VSM wants to encourage that local support to continue.

Helping orphans, street youth

In East Africa, there are many children orphaned because of AIDS, and other young people living on the street who are engaged in prostitution. Since the 1980s, the Owitis have worked to help these people through the Ebenezer Life Centre, which Winnie manages. In the '80s, AIDS was becoming more common, but it "became rampant in the '90s," explains Winnie. "There was need for much, much more when AIDS started killing people." Parents began dying of AIDS, and soon "children started becoming the leaders of some homes."

The Owitis started taking children into their own home. "In 1993, we had about 21 children in our house and we didn't have much privacy.... It was a real struggle every day" to care for the children and continue with their other ministry work, admits Winnie.

In the late '80s and early '90s, it was difficult raising the money needed to support the young people. "I prayed that God would ... give us a home" for the youth, says Winnie. "In 1993, we were able to purchase a small piece of land ... and started building a mud house."

Now, the Ebenezer centre supports 216 children. Some of them are supported by monthly donations from North American donors.

Winnie Owiti with a sick child. VSM churches are helping out AIDS orphans and street children.

Heartbroken by lost generation

A new project is on the horizon for VSM: helping out young prostitutes and their children who are living on the streets of Nairobi, Kenya. "That has been in my heart for a long time," says Winnie. "My heart is broken for a generation that has lost sense. But with our God, we know it is possible to heal these people and make them have a future."

In Nairobi, "Children of 12 or 13 are pregnant and are mothers. They're bringing up street children, that are born in the streets, live in the streets, have nowhere to go."

Recently, the Kenyan government gave VSM land in the city of Kisumu, for setting up a new rehabilitation centre for those street youth.

Preaching tools needed

Another need of the church in East Africa is for preaching tools, such as good PA systems, says Winnie. Evangelists such as Peter Youngren, of St. Catharines, Ont., and Reinhard Bonnke, of Germany, sometimes preach in East Africa, and bring the latest technology with them. But once they leave, local pastors have limited means with which to continue the evangelistic work.

"I really believe ministers should be equipped so that they will be able to go fast and reach more people, while the land is still ripe," asserts Winnie.

Muslims are making inroads in East Africa. Winnie observes, "Muslims are becoming a threat right now.... Muslims have burned Catholic churches in Nairobi." But she notes that 75 per cent of Kenyans are Christians.

"The answer for Africa is the Gospel," asserts Bishop Owiti. "It is the light. A lot of evils will be eliminated by the Gospel of the Kingdom of God being preached."

Political situation improving for Christians in East Africa

Alan Doerksen

FORT ERIE, Ont. — Political factors have sometimes limited the freedom of Christians in East Africa. But recently, there has been more freedom and opportunity for Christians to preach the Gospel, according to Bishop Silas and Winnie Owiti.

The Owitis note that the presidents of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are all Christians. "We are very grateful to our presidents because they have left the door open for evangelization," says Silas Owiti.

Kenyan President Daniel Arapmoi is born-again, says Silas: "He loves God, he does a lot for the work of God."

But Kenya has some important decision-making to do this year, says Winnie Owiti. "Our nation Kenya is going through a constitutional review right now, and also this will be the year for elections. It is sad that these two things fall at the same time, and so politics will make the constitutional review really political. Because of poverty, it is easy to lure people into believing what you say, just by giving them something." The Owitis' organization, Voice of Salvation Ministries (VSM), is helping to educate Kenyans about the constitution.

Situation in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has been in the news recently because of the recent re-election of President Robert Mugabe there. The Owitis have been to Zimbabwe, and Silas has preached there twice, but the Owitis do not do ongoing work in Zimbabwe. Commenting on the political situation there, Winnie says, "The people keep on crying for 'change' — whether it is good or bad, they don't care. They want a different person to lead them. I think this is what Zimbabwe was going through."

Describing Mugabe, she says, "To the people, he sounds good, because he has given the people back their land. The Africans who come from Zimbabwe say that that was the only weapon that could let him go back to leadership: the fact that he could offer people land, and it is free land.... Anyone giving you something free, you love that person." But she condemns what he did, and adds, "What he did was hurting even to us Africans.... I feel that with the next elections, Zimbabwe will be more than ready for another president."

Silas observes, "Although President Mugabe is very intelligent, very knowledgeable, yet people want change. Because of his age, also, he will be forced to give up for someone else. This time, he achieved popularity because he took land from the white man.... The white man has contributed a lot for the progress and development of the nation of Zimbabwe."

Uganda's church grows again

"In Uganda, President Yoweri Musoveni is quite open to the Gospel. His wife is born-again," states Silas. "The country's open, and God is blessing Uganda."

The economy has improved in Uganda, but as a result, the cost of living has increased, which makes it more expensive to support evangelists and pastors there. "The little money we send there is like peanuts," says Winnie.

In northern Uganda, rebels are battling the government, explains Winnie. "In those places, it's really hard to preach." One VSM pastor works in that region, but it is dangerous.

The danger was much worse during the reign of Idi Amin in Uganda in the 1970s. "Many of our churches died during the Idi Amin war," says Winnie. "The church was really paralyzed during the war." But now, many churches have made a comeback. "The church is growing. We have good reports. They have opened about 50 [VSM] churches in the last three years" in Uganda. "We praise God for that."

Winnie observes, "When the political situation ... is not in order, it makes it very hard to preach the Gospel. But we thank God that East Africa is becoming stable."

News/Politics

Christians overseas should recognize reality of cults in China

... *continued from page 1*

heretical from a Christian standpoint, but not necessarily a punishable offense. However, any government would take action against those who rape, steal, injure and even murder under the cloak of sectarian religious activities.

Chinese have long history, long memory

The Chinese have a long history — and a long memory. The government is well aware that over the centuries most dynasties fell when impoverished and desperate peasants formed into religious cults and secret societies that sooner or later mutated into open rebellion. The Red Turbans and the White Lotus were examples of Taoist or Buddhist sects that rose up against the emperor.

However, the most recent rebellion came from the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, which seized Nanjing as its capital from the decadent Manchu Qing dynasty in 1853 and was only suppressed 11 years later at the cost of 20 million lives. The Taiping "emperor," Hong Xiuquan, was a failed Confucian scholar who had read a Christian tract and had visions that he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ, sent to this earth to destroy the "demon" Manchus.

Many missionaries were initially impressed by the Taiping fervor for the Ten Commandments and the Sabbath Day. Could this be God's means for the evangelization of China? But Hong's brutal slaughter of his opponents and his vast harem brought bitter disillusionment.

Today, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) no longer extols the Taipings as peasant revolutionaries as in the radical Maoist years. The CCP is poised to welcome capitalists and entrepreneurs into its ranks. Some Party cadres wear designer suits and hold lavish banquets costing more than 10 years' income of the average farmer.

China already has a huge number of rural unemployed. Urban unemployment is expected to triple over the next four years as reforms initiated by China's membership in the World Trade Organization bankrupt uncompetitive industries, according to an April 29 Reuters/China Daily report. Only three years ago, Beijing was rocked by the demonstrations of 10,000 Falun Gong supporters outside the CCP leadership compound.

Suppression of cults a top priority

Is it any wonder that the suppression of sects and cults, seen as the spawning ground of political disaffection and rebellion, is now a top priority for what has become an intensely conservative and reactive rather than proactive regime? "Unity and Stability" at all costs has become the CCP's mantra.

In April 2000 the Ministry of Public Security defined a cult as any organization which:

- Sets up an illegal organization in the false name of religion;
- Deifies its leaders;
- Fabricates and spreads superstition and heterodox (unorthodox) beliefs to excite doubts and deceive the people and recruits and controls its members by these means;
- Systematically disturbs social order and injures the lives and property of citizens.

This is a catch-all list of regulations that can be used to ban virtually any religious organization. Most house churches can be falsely labeled cults under the first, third and fourth points. All house churches that have not registered are illegal and members are potentially liable to arrests and fines. Those that spread the gospel vigorously can be accused of spreading heterodox beliefs and recruiting followers.

BAPTIST PRESS PHOTOS (2)

Many house churches operate 'semi-openly,' their leaders and places of worship known to local police and officials, but meetings are relatively undisturbed. In other areas, they have to meet secretly or "underground."

Millions of farmers, like this man in Shandong Province, are moving into China's cities in search of work and a better life. They are open to new ideas, relationships — and the gospel.

In practice, the CCP has so far listed 14 cults as illegal, in addition to Falun Gong. Of these, 12 are "Christian" and only two are Buddhist. Of the "Christian" cults, many are heretical by orthodox Christian standards.

Leaders claim to be God

For instance, the founder of the Lingling cult, Hua Xuehe, claimed he was the "Second Jesus." The founder of the Lord God cult, Liu Jiaguo, claimed to be the "Lord God," swindled believers out of 400,000 RMB and raped 19 women. Wu Yangming, the founder of the Established King cult, also claimed to be the Messiah and raped many women.

The Shouters or Local Church, based in California, was founded by Witness Lee, Watchman Nee's right-hand-man. Although on the fringes of the Christian world in that they hold a very narrow view of themselves as the only true church and Lee's views on the Trinity have been criticized, many consider them to be Bible-believing Christians. Viewed with suspicion by most evangelicals, for years they have operated freely in the U.S., Taiwan and other countries. However, in China they are banned — probably because of Lee's strong anti-communist views.

The Total Scope Church, also known as the New Birth Church, was founded by Xu Yongze and has grown to many millions. This house church has been criticized both by the Three Self state church and by other more conservative house churches as being a cult.

There is certainly evidence of "sheep-stealing" and of high pressure on new converts, forcing them to weep and wail while confessing a whole list of sins. However, a fair assessment would be that the group is extreme in practice, rather than heretical in doctrine. Xu and many members have been imprisoned at different times and the church strongly persecuted.

House churches in difficult position

Orthodox unregistered house churches are placed in a peculiarly difficult position at present. The mere fact of not being registered means they are technically illegal and may suffer the full weight of the law.

In practice, conditions vary considerably. In some areas, the authorities turn a blind eye. Many house churches operate 'semi-openly,' their leaders and places of worship known to local police and officials, but meetings are relatively undisturbed. In other areas, they have to meet secretly or "underground."

The government relies to some extent on local official church leaders in the Three Self Patriotic Movement, China Christian Council or Patriotic Catholic Association to keep them informed of all religious activities. In areas where these "patriotic" religious leaders are sympathetic to their unregistered counterparts, a compromise ensues. However, in areas where the local official clergy are hostile to house churches, they may spy, inform and encourage the police to arrest house church leaders, falsely labeling them as cults.

The Chinese government should not arbitrarily label groups "heretical," China watchers say. Government at all levels should allow full religious freedom, only intervening if criminal activity has been undertaken by a religious organization.

In China, the tradition of Confucian state orthodoxy has been overlaid by the orthodoxy of "Marxism-Leninism- Mao Zedong thought" that is basically hostile to all religions. Only mainstream religions as defined by the state are tolerated. The state wrongly arrogates to itself the right to label religious groups as orthodox or heterodox. It still regards "freedom of religious belief" as a privilege to be granted by the CCP rather than as a basic human right.

Christians overseas need to recognize the reality of cults in China today. They should not demonize the Chinese authorities nor dismiss every report of cultic activity as disinformation. They need to recognize that unregistered groups cover a wide spectrum from perfectly orthodox Christians to the lunatic and criminal fringe.

Perhaps above all they need to distinguish wider human rights from purely Christian issues. They will rightly wish to support Christians wrongly imprisoned for their faith. But what about Tibetan Buddhist nuns tortured in prison? While assessing Falun Gong as a dangerous cult from a Christian perspective, will they nevertheless speak out against the reported death in Chinese police custody of over 100 Falun Gong followers?

Editorial

Virtual security and the new weaponry

Harry der Nederlanden

We have all read about the after-effects of the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers. Our collective sense of vulnerability. The increase in church attendance. The realization that family and friends are more important than becoming a millionaire. Visions of a wounded community pulling together to help each other.

Well, things are almost back to normal. The stock market has almost recovered and suicide bombers seem to be restricting themselves to the streets of Israel. With the increased security in place, people are flying again. Church attendance is down to normal once more and the lawyers and computer geeks are back to working 75 hour weeks in order to become millionaires by the time they are 45.

Cool to be rich in America

Dinesh D'Souza in *The Virtue of Prosperity* cites a poll taken of 1,000 college grads: 25 per cent planned to start their own companies and be millionaires by the age of 30. Another 25 per cent were more modest; they figured to be millionaires by the age of forty. It's become cool to be rich and to be a big spender in America. The rich are proliferating like new websites. More than five million American families belong to the millionaire club, and if things go on as they are, by 2010 there will be 20 million millionaires in America.

Some are so rich they can literally buy anything they want. To make this concrete, D'Souza uses this illustration: Bill Gates and his offspring could spend 10 million a day forever without eating into the principal. Many of America's super-rich are worth more than the Gross Domestic Product of entire countries. People this rich have a hard time keeping in touch with the real world; they begin to live in fantasyland.

To my shock, I discovered several years ago that I didn't even qualify for membership in the middle class; in fact, I was even on the verge of dropping out of the working class. Yet, I felt myself quite privileged. Of course, at the time we were living in Grand Rapids at the edge of the so-called ghetto. As beneficiaries of a white exodus from a changing neighborhood, we had been able to buy a house there cheap. In our mid-twenties we had our own house. My father didn't own his own house till he was over 50.

We North Americans — almost all of us — are rich, super-rich, and we know it. At some level we feel the unreality (the guilt?) of all this accumulated wealth. Some will point out that it is the product of our great economic system which rewards private initiative, and that this gargantuan global business machine creates jobs where jobs are badly needed.

The really good things of life

True. But at the same time, we are only all too aware that we are consuming a vastly disproportionate amount of the world's finite resources, and that, while we are living better than Medieval monarchs, we are destroying the ability of our rivers and lakes to sustain aquatic life, we are bequeathing allergies, asthma and cancer to upcoming generations, and we are *not* succeeding very well in passing on many of the really good things of life, such as a stable, committed family life in which the children feel loved and secure.

Feeling the fragility and unreality of this lifestyle, North America's rich and upper middle classes are more and more constructing for themselves bubble communities in which only those like themselves can afford to live. Fearful of lower class and black resentment and all sorts of crime, they separate themselves from those neighborhoods where people have to struggle for a living and where the damaged and the weak and the unlucky dream not of retiring rich at forty but of getting 40 bucks to buy groceries.

These were the thoughts that flitted through my mind as I read, on the one hand, Michael Ignatieff's book, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond,* and Tom Clancy's blockbuster bestseller, *The Cardinal of the Kremlin,* alongside of news commentary about America's continuing war against terrorism and Bush's plans to deploy some form of Reagan's dream of a defense system that would monitor American skies and territories and zap any threat to her security before it reached her shores. Clancy's novel, written in 1987, centres around a weapons' race between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. to create super lasers that work in conjunction with satellites circling the earth to spot and shoot down any missiles aimed at America. Along with the sophisticated computer technology that enables us to pinpoint targets, such new weapons introduce the idea that one can wage a war that doesn't kill (very many) people and won't cost the lives of our soldiers but which will only destroy the other side's weapons, technology and other infrastructures that enable it to wage war.

Ignatieff's *Virtual War* examines the NATO action against Serbian ethnic cleansing in Kosovo from this perspective. Neither the U.S. nor Europe would have committed themselves to this "war" if it would have cost the lives of large numbers of their own soldiers. Nor would public opinion have enabled them to continue the war for long if it had cost the lives of large numbers of Serbian civilians. Milosovic counted on the West's reluctance to sacrifice the lives of their own people in the name of human rights for Kosovars and their awareness that the sight of Serbian victims of NATO bombing on TV would turn public opinion against such a venture.

Ignatieff points out that the Kosovo "war" was not against a nation that attacked another nation as previous wars have been, but it was an intervention in a civil war. A legitimate government reacted in so brutal a way toward rebels that it outraged our standard of human rights. We intervened only because we thought we could do so with impunity, that is, without incurring very many casualties on our side.

What exactly are values worth?

"But war without death – to our side – is war that ceases to be fully real to us," writes Ignatieff; hence, the title "virtual war". He goes on to ask, "But if impunity is required before values are defended, what exactly are values worth?"

Ignatieff conjures up the possibility that we in the West will, from our high concept of ourselves as defenders of human rights, find it easier to demonize and then bully other countries which do not share our view of human rights.

The possibilities created with the new weaponry open us up to even deeper temptations. We rich westerners might be tempted to think that we can create a security bubble around ourselves to protect us from the resentful, impoverished, barbarian masses that threaten our privilege. We might be tempted to rely on technology to enable us to go on living as profligates without answering the moral challenge posed by the Third World faces that gaze at us from the TV screen.

We might be tempted to rely on weapons technology instead of doing what we ought to, namely, enter into a struggle to give these people hope.

By allowing events like the attack on the Twin Towers to spur us into seeking security in a technology that will insulate us from our neighbors, we not only diminish them, we also diminish ourselves, for we trap ourselves in a course that allows us to smugly, self-righteously maintain a lifestyle that is rapacious, that feeds an insatiable appetite for inessentials while others starve. We embrace a way of life that does not seek to cultivate a global human community but which erects high-tech walls for a pampered minority intent only on preserving its privilege while painting itself as the defender of freedom and human rights.

We can turn away from this path not just by converting others (such as the Muslims) but by converting ourselves. We need forgiveness for our greed, and we need to turn from our ways in more concrete transformations in the way we live, not just personally but collectively, as well. Seeking conversion on a corporate, political level is never easy, and we will never all agree on *How Now Shall We Live?* (the title of one of Colson's books), but we need to keep the discussion going in publications like CC and the *Banner*, by reading good books and by discerning the spirits at work in the culture around us.

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent biweekly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF
Editor: Harry der Nederlanden *cceditor@aol.com;*
Journalist, Layout Designer: Alan Doerksen
ccjournal@aol.com;
Circulation: Rose der Nederlanden *ccsubscrip@aol.com;*
Accounts Manager: Ineke Strayer-Medcalf *ccadpromo@aol.com*

REGIONAL REPORTERS
Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; Jacky Huberts, Langley, B.C.; James Kwantes, Abbotsford, B.C.; Stephen VanHelden, Calgary; Gordon Legge, Calgary; Jessie Schut, Edmonton; Valerie Walker, Halifax; Robert VanderVennen, Toronto; Margaret Dinsdale, Toronto.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Doug Roorda, Wendy Saunders, Erick Schuringa, Nelly Westerhoff, Bert Witvoet

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact the managing editor if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier.*

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON, L2W 1A1
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Fax: (905) 682-8313;
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375
We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Opinion/Letters

Synod should reiterate its stand on the use of nuclear weapons

Gerald Vandezande

Is there anything in the CRC's theological tradition that directly addresses the United States' decision to create contingency plans for using nuclear weapons against seven countries?

"Jesus is Lord!" That public testimony is the heart-felt commitment of God's people. In the spirit of that commitment, Synod adopted Guidelines for Justifiable Warfare in 1982 (pp. 102-106). Recognizing its own public responsibility, Synod then sent a letter to the United States' President, the Canadian Prime Minister, and the United Nations' Secretary General.

The letter refered these world leaders to the Guidelines and communicated that "in the present political situation of the world our synod and many of our church members are deeply concerned about and fearful of the possibility of the actual use of nuclear weapons."

Stockpiling of nuclear weapons threatens survival of human race

Further, "Synod urges you to defend the sanctity of life with all the authority and power of your high office. The present stockpiling of nuclear weapons threatens the existence and survival of the entire human race. Synod urges you, therefore, to reduce the number of these atrocious weapons as much and as rapidly as possible in order to ultimately abolish these weapons altogether under proper international surveillance."

"Jesus is Lord!": how much more is that public testimony needed today! In stark contrast to biblical teachings, confessional affirmations and synodical decisions, the United States and perhaps other nations are now redeveloping an explicit first-use policy for nuclear weapons. Clearly, people of faith are called to live out Jesus' explicit challenge to express together publicly, in Spirit-led resurrection faith, His liberating command of love. Synod 2002 — indeed, all of us — are called to be a light, leaven and salt in God's world by writing President Bush and urging him to abandon this unjust means of fighting terrorism.

"Jesus is Lord!" That's why we reject idolatry: "having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God" (L.D.34). For "great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; God is to be revered above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols" (1 Chron. 16:25,26).

God is our sure defense

It's time to publicly declare, as people of faith, what we confess in *Our World Belongs to God*: "We are to obey God in politics, pray for our rulers, and help governments to know his will for public life" (53). Therefore, "We call on governments to do public justice (54). We deplore the arms race. We pledge to walk in ways of peace, confessing that our world belongs to God; he is our sure defense" (55).

Note: This article has been submitted to* The Banner. *We print it here by special permission.

Stories on resourceful women, Psalms and Runner appreciated

Thank you very much for placing the article on Proverbs 31. Again, the layout was superb, embodying the celebration. The quality of the reproductions was also very good and almost convince me I should take my viral lumps in this technology if it can come through by scanning what otherwise would be a very involved matter of obtaining and sending of photographs.

And the short piece on renewing our Genevan Psalm heritage by Koyzis warms the heart.Thank you for providing faithful news coverage, editorials, design, and multiple pieces that jog one's attention and contribute to the sense of communion among the people of God. *Sterkte!*

Cal Seerveld
Toronto

Runner tribute strikes a chord

Thank you for the recent tribute to Dr. H. Evan Runner. In our church bulletin I wrote, following his death:

"Dr. Runner, who was professor of philosophy at Calvin College for years, has had a tremendous influence in the lives of numerous students and others. In the 1950's and 60's he has also been the driving force behind the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto as well as movements such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

"During my student years I have had many wonderful and influential professors. Along with many other people, however, I can say that no professor has had as much influence on me as Dr. Runner. I humbly thank God for this great man of God, an exceptionally learned man, but a man with a childlike faith and trust in God. His Biblical and Reformational vision extended beyond the limits of the Christian Reformed community. I find it hard to believe that professor Runner is gone. He's not really gone. He is now in the Lord's presence Whose cause and kingdom he promoted in an incredibly enthusiastic and all encompassing way. To God be the glory."

Ralph Koops, Pastor,
Maranatha Chr. Reformed Church
Cambridge, Ont.

Thanks for editorial

Just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your editorial: "On a hilltop." We received C. C. yesterday and I have read it twice. I think the article will speak to many people, who can identify with your feelings. To be able to write like you do, while still feeling weak and sick from chemo, must take a lot of willpower, and you are receiving strength and grace to continue working.

Keep up the good work.

Albert & Berta Hosmar
Whitby, Ont.

Proportionate voting has many benefits

Vern Gleddie is correct, a more proportional voting system has many potential benefits including greater accountability in government (C.C. April 22).

Your readers can lend their support to bringing about voting system reform by asking to be placed on the e-mail list of Fair Vote Canada. Just send an e-mail to info@fairvotecanada.org, or in British Columbia, Fair Voting B.C. mail@fairvotingbc.ca. You will be kept informed about these citizens based attempts to change our voting system.

Christians in particular should support a more proportional voting system in that it has the potential to make our politics less pragmatic and more principled. It would move power from the prime minister's office to Parliament, and from the premiers to the provincial legislatures, shifting the focus in politics from leaders, style and images, to parties, principles and platforms.

Nick Loenen, Director,
Fair Voting B.C.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905)-682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

Please take advantage of* Christian Courier*'s Business Directory. For the low cost of $25* (+ G.S.T.), *you can advertise your business.
(Please add 7 % G.S.T.)

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 09375. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY, 14092.

Subcriptions:	**Canada**	**U.S.A.**
(effective Jan. 1, 1999)	(G.S.T. incl.)	(G.S.T. free)
one year (26 issues)	$39.54	$31.60 (US)
two years (52 issues)	$75.00	$60.00 (US)

overseas one year $80.00 surface mail
Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (9 business days before publication date); classified advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (9 business days before publication date). See classified pages for more details. Advertising rate sheets available. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.

Address all correspondence to: 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1, Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313, e-mail: subscriptions: ccsubscrip@aol.com, advertising: ccadpromo@aol.com

PRINTED IN CANADA

Environment

Why Albertans should move to Quebec

Harry der Nederlanden

Should Canada sign the Kyoto climate treaty drawn up about five years ago to cut down on the production of greenhouse gasses around the globe? While almost all Canadians agree that decisive actions should be taken to cut down on pollution of all sorts, not everyone by any means agrees that the best way to do it is by signing an international treaty in which other countries will be able to put us in the stocks if we don't live up to its stipulations.

Kyoto is a very focused agreement prompted by alarm about global warming. Although our own Bert Hielema is very sure that our use of fossil fuels and other pollutants have had catastrophic effects on the weather, not all scientists are at all so sure. Some point to equally large climatic fluctuations that were not caused by humans, so it is entirely possible that a fraction of global warming is part of some global natural process.

However, not too many of us — scientists included — would want to bet on that. Besides, there are a host of reasons aside from climate for us to take serious steps to cut down on greenhouse gases. The health of our children, for one.

Government softening its resolve

Environment Minister David Anderson and the Chretien government as a whole seemed at first to indicate that Canada will soon ratify the accord. A report issued by the federal government in mid-May, however, seemed to soften that resolve. It is meant to secure agreement from the provinces and is obviously also designed to give the appearance that the federal government is not acting without consulting "the people". Most agree, nevertheless, that the paper is less a debate about *whether* to sign Kyoto than *how* to achieve its goals.

How anyone can predict with any accuracy, as the paper does, that at worst there would be a 1.7 per cent reduction in economic growth under Kyoto is beyond me. No one can possibly calculate all the various factors into a meaningful equation given the huge variety of factors that impact the economy. The government can't even calculate the cost of major building projects. But clearly, everyone realizes that it will cost us many billions of dollars to comply, and that it will hurt some industries more than others.

That's why Alberta is squawking the loudest. The ability of the oil industry to compete with the U.S. and Mexico, which have both refused to sign Kyoto, will certainly be damaged. Alberta is estimated to generate one-third of Canada's greenhouse gases. And the tar-sands project — one of the largest oil deposits in the world — creates a lot of such gases in the recovery process. A *National Post* article said that while the average Quebecois, with his clean hydropower, produces about 12 megatons of greenhouse gases per year, the average Albertan produces 69 megatons per year. The article also says that the entire province of Alberta produces 200 megatons per year. Someone must have dropped a decimal point somewhere.

Some realistic options

The government report sketches out four options for cutting 240 megatons of gases per year – nationwide. (Good news: using the above numbers, all we'd have to do is send a couple of dozen Albertans to Quebec and we'd meet our quota.) But the government proffers some more realistic options:

Option one, included no doubt just to make the others look better to Alberta, puts a cap on emissions by industry. Anyone that exceeded this cap would have to pay for the privilege.

Option two, much more expensive, would introduce incentives – tax cuts and subsidies to encourage reductions and alternatives.

Option three combines one and two but puts much of the onus on big companies like power plants, refineries and factories.

Option four adds the pipedream to three that the other countries who ratify Kyoto will allow us to lower our standards because we export clean hydro power to the U.S. Fat chance!

This report reads like the options my wife offers to our kids: Would you like to scrub the toilets, do the laundry, or vacuum the living room? It works better than asking them outright to do what you want them to do, namely, vacuum.

Predictably, environmentalists say the costs of compliance will be negligible, perhaps even making Canada more efficient in the long run and certainly reducing healthcare costs, while Alberta's politicians and oilmen say the goals aren't realistic and will result in the loss of many thousands of jobs. What in other respects may be an advantage — our proximity to the U.S. would in this case be a disadvantage, for the U.S. refuses to saddle its economy with standards enforced by some international body. The U.S. hasn't thereby rejected all environmental standards; in fact, many U.S. states have done a better job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions than Canada, according to recent statistics.

We need outside pressure

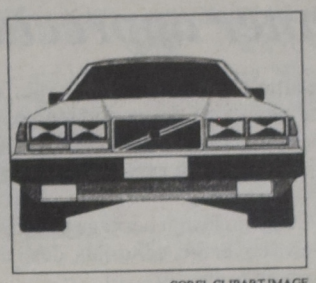
Canada is very different from Europe or Japan. Can we rely on those countries to recognize and allow for differences when push comes to shove? Why do we need committees of foreigners to hold us to meaningful environmental goals? The embarrassing answer is that when we set our own goals, we don't seem to take them seriously. We are like those in AA: we need outside encouragement and pressure to keep us honest.

It's sign Kyoto, it seems, or send those Albertans to Quebec.

Jesus and the SUV

Creation waits...
John Wood

A catchy phrase has been making the rounds recently on the Internet. It renders the letters WWJD into the question, "What Would Jesus Drive?" Of course some wag was quick to answer that "Jesus would tool around in an old Plymouth." Why, you ask? Because "the Bible says God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a Fury." The disciples on the other hand car-pooled in a Honda, because they were found to be together in one Accord.



COREL CLIPART IMAGE

Yes, this is an old joke, and I can hear your groans all the way to Edmonton. But behind it may lie a more serious matter. The idea of asking what transport Jesus might select in our car-dependent culture may not be so trivial. A group of clerics in Boston has raised this question in a pointed form. In light of the U.S. failure to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on reducing CO_2 levels they are asking, "Would Jesus Drive an SUV?"

Changing the climate on the morning commute

Whether he would drive a particular make of car, or any car for that matter, is perhaps a moot question. But the choices we make in manufacturing and purchasing contemporary vehicles have moral implications. One of the remarkable facts of the modern world is the interconnectedness of planetary circulation systems. Small individual actions taken together add up to climate changing events. A simple choice of transportation is more complex than we realized even a few short years ago.

The current target in the renewed campaign to reduce gas consumption is the decade old Sport Utility Vehicle craze. What started with a minor shift in preference to "light-trucks" has become a phenomenal marketing success. Over one-third of new car sales are SUVs. But the less stringent fuel efficiency regulations for SUVs has resulted in a decline in the total fleet efficiency.

Picking on SUVs?

So why are environmentalists picking on SUV owners? Are they just scapegoating on an easy target? There is certainly an element of truth here. But consider the following. The decline in total fleet fuel efficiency by one mile per gallon turns out to be equivalent to the energy production expected from opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve in Alaska. Now that makes the U.S. administration's argument about the urgency of entering this reserve seem hollow. So we need to look behind the headlines and the ad copy to see what is actually being sold to us by political or industrial partisans. Of course this is picking on SUV dealers. But the four-ton behemoths being marketed, as "needs-based" family cars are simply outrageous. In the bigger picture, complaining about picking on SUVs sounds suspiciously like special pleading.

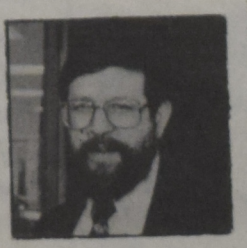
Withering words

The political speech on the climate change question is becoming rather bellicose. I take much of that as mere posturing in an attempt to make sure that Alberta, for instance, does not bear an inordinate share of the burden for meeting our national obligations. But mixed into this discussion are more troubling assertions. Some suggest that not only is climate change not occurring, but that even if it is, we do not bear any responsibility to help other nations. "Let them first clean up their industrial act, then we will think about ours." Besides, "the time frame is really just around the corner." So, "let's slow down and think over this costly issue." After nearly 10 years of discussion some are beginning to wonder if we will ever take action on climate change.

Voices for change

Today, in this "climate" of rhetoric we need new voices, with reasoned arguments for doing what is right. Sir John Houghton, evangelical Christian and Chairman of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), is one such voice. He has identified climate change as one of the central challenges facing us today. The IPCC report clearly states that 1) climate change is occurring, and 2) there is a human link to these changes. These points are now accepted by all but the most reactionary groups.

The solution, Houghton notes, requires us to invoke basic biblical principles of justice and equity, on an international basis. Together with Dr. Cal DeWitt, Director of the AuSable Institute, Houghton has called Christian scientists together this summer, to help mobilize the conservative Protestant Church in this effort. It is encouraging to see Christian leaders taking a stronger stand on this important question of our day.



John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton.

News Analysis/Media

Newsbytes: From Christian race horses to frozen humans

Harry der Nederlanden

When Pat Robertson, TV evangelist, anchorman and moving force behind the Christian Broadcasting Network, talks about horses, you'd expect him to be talking about the horsemen of the Apocalypse. Not so, he may be talking about Mr. Pat, a young racehorse he bought last year for $520,000 and which he expected to race in the Kentucky Derby. When he mentions "the sport of kings", Robertson is not sermonizing about the naughty behavior of King Solomon, he's talking about one of his favorite hobbies. It's an expensive one: he paid $125,000 to breed one of his mares with a kingly stud.

Kingly doings kept secret

It's too bad he doesn't have to ride the horses himself. Perhaps having his rump jolted in the saddle would have pounded a little sense into him. He managed to keep his kingly doings secret for some time, but when the *New York Times* brought his royal aspirations to light, he quickly recognized that he was not projecting a very suitable model and promised to sell his horses. Maybe he read the Campolo article on page 16.

According to Robertson's personal assistant, G. G. Conklin, Robertson's decision was received "within our organization with much inner turmoil, as most of us understand the biblical reason he's taking this direction, but have such a sense of loss for him that he will no longer have this enjoyment in his life."

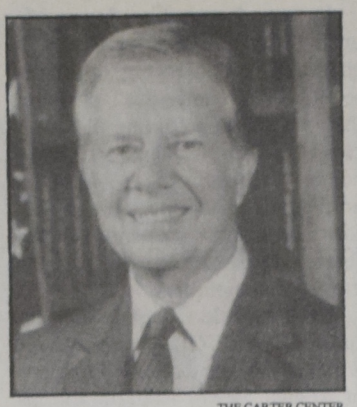
Maybe those horses do have something to do with the Apocalypse after all.

Playing catch with Castro

Meanwhile former U.S. president Jimmy Carter was playing catch in Cuba with the aging Fidel Castro. At the University of Havana he gave a live television address to the Cuban people in which he expressed admiration for the achievements of Cuba in such domains as health care and education, but he also spelled out his understanding of democracy and individual human rights.

His was a gutsy effort to reduce tensions between the U.S. and Cuba. The Cubans appreciated it, especially the Christian leaders. A number of them met with Carter telling him how Cuban churches were meeting the needs of their communities and suggesting possible areas of co-operation with US organizations on such social issues as housing.

"One of the biggest needs we have in Cuba is the housing problem, and as Carter is related to Habitat for Humanity, I told him we are open for co-operation," Rev. Raul Suarez, director of the Martin Luther King Center, told ENI, referring to the international ministry



THE CARTER CENTER

Jimmy Carter

associated with Carter that builds affordable housing for homeless people.

Methodist Bishop Ricardo Pereira told ENI: "I think this is a very important visit that will serve as a means of reconciliation. We know our brothers in the USA have their eyes upon all that is happening here and they will exert their influence so that the relationships between our countries will improve." Carter, who has dined with kings, truly has taken up a kingly hobby.

Colombian rebels attack

About 100 people were killed and about another 100 injured in northwest Colombia when guerillas dropped a mortar bomb on a church in which they were seeking refuge. Leftist rebels of the Revo-

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Fidel Castro

lutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were fighting right-wing paramilitaries of the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, around the town of Bojoya. When the battle moved out of the jungle and into the town, the mayor moved citizens into what he thought was a safe place — the church. Some 38 of the victims were children.

The trouble began when a force of "right-wing paramilitaries" entered the town in search of rebels, so the UN declared that they too shared in the blame. FARC took responsibility for the bombing of the church but said it was an accident.

Colombian president Andres Pastrana has asked the European Union to reconsider its decision not to include guerillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN) on its list of terrorist groups. Both groups are reportedly listed on the U.S. list of foreign terrorist organizations. Mr. Pastrana's peace talks with rebels of FARC collapsed earlier this year.

Terrorists or freedom fighters

Of course, what some call terrorists others call freedom fighters. Milosovic called the Kosovo Albanians who took up arms against his legitimate government terrorists, but when he undertook his genocidal campaign against the Kosovo population, he himself became a terrorist. Most critics will agree that Colombia has not only been plagued by powerful and ruthless drug warlords and Marxist guerillas but also by corrupt governments. The latter have turned a blind eye toward the activities of "right wing" paramilitaries that have terrorized villagers as much as the thugs armed by drug dealers and the rebels.

Alvaro Uribe, who is the strongest candidate for Colombia's presidency, is labeled as an ultraconservative candidate because he promises to crack down on leftist rebels, a pledge that has been welcomed by a conflict-weary populace. A week before the election he held a commanding lead in the polls.

Continued on page 16...

Deciphering Hollywood

Harry der Nederlanden

William (Bill) Romanowski, Professor of Media Studies at Calvin College is becoming a star on the lecture circuit as he shows filmgoers ways to hear the evangel in and through popular media such as film.

At one time people may have talked about the latest rising star among poets and novelists; nowadays the hot topic in the world of pop culture is the latest film. On the day I'm writing this, every TV news broadcast felt obliged to end with a shot of young people dressed as characters from the *Star Wars* films waiting in line, a very long line, for George Lucas' next episode. Romanowski spoke to a sizeable group in Toronto and was sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies, Imago and Cal Seerveld's mother-in-law.

This passion for narrative, for an engaging story, is nothing new. In the nineteenth century masses of people gathered on the New York and Boston docks to get the next instalment of Dicken's latest novel and to learn what happened to little Nel. Some of Dickens' long novels were not published between a single set of covers but in a magazine or in several volumes. Leslie Fiedler, one of my one-time profs at the State University of New York, sees those Victorian novels, which we now value as 'high' culture, as the equivalent of our contemporary soap operas.

High vs. popular culture

Romanowski is a Christian critic who also wants to question this distinction between 'high' and popular culture. Popular culture is no less worthy of serious study than 'high' culture.

When we go to see a film, he pointed out, we willingly suspend our disbelief and allow the images to take us into another world. We respond emotionally toward what we see happening on the screen; yet, we don't mistake it for reality. We know it's 'only' a film.

Between ourselves and the 'space' of the film-world there's a screen. That screen, however, represents quite a lot. Behind it there is a huge industrial complex – a synthesis of art, commerce, technology and culture. Most of what we see in the theatres is the product of the complex we call Hollywood.

The films that come out of Hollywood, says Romanowski, are market-driven. They cater to the largest possible audience by seeking familiar points of reference. Working with very basic themes, they seek a lowest common denominator, lest they alienate some part of their market. Only seldom do such films challenge commonly held beliefs; they tend to reassure us and to affirm our dearest beliefs, values and desires. That's how they become popular.

The rugged individual

A recurrent theme in the Hollywood film is the rugged individual who heroically overcome obstacles, usually posed by the establishment, to achieve success. He shakes free of the limiting past in struggling upward toward the realization of a promise in a gracious future. America is portrayed as the land of opportunity in which one can make something of himself by overcoming or transforming his beginnings.

Romanowski illustrated his lecture with film clips from such popular films as *Rocky* and *Erin Brockovitch*. Both films show someone struggling against factors that would render them nobodies – lower class origins for Rocky and being a woman for Brockovitch – to overcome much more powerful opponents. We see Rocky training in an old church in which the crucifix still hangs in the background – a subtle way for the filmmaker to associate Rocky with the figure of Christ. Brockovitch is another folk hero: she could be anyone of us, yet she becomes a giant slayer.

Hollywood relies on such linear, cause-and-effect narratives which show all the basic problems resolved in the end to make us feel good about the sort of order we live in. It focuses on a main character with clearly defined traits, motivations and goals which he or she is able to achieve by his own inner virtues. In the typical Hollywood movie, the hero has within himself everything he needs to realize himself. "God helps those who help themselves," is the implied worldview. Such a worldview diminishes our sense of sin's effects. No one in this world is in need of a Savior.

These themes are woven into the story without being explicitly stated by any of the characters. In many ways, these subtle communications of a secular worldview are much more insidious than bad language, sex scenes and violence.

Part of living as a Christian in contemporary society and culture involves learning how to interpret the themes and images thrown at us in popular film; it is to wrestle with the spirits of the age. We are privileged to have such teachers as Romanowski who are able to open our eyes to such spirits from a solidly Christian perspective and to have institutions like the ICS willing to sponsor such speakers.

Church

Rebels force churches to close in Colombia

David Miller

COCHABAMBA, Bolivia (Compass) — In mid-April, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) forced 11 evangelical Protestant churches in Arauquita, a town near Colombia's border with Venezuela, to suspend public worship services.

According to a report published in the Bogota newspaper *El Tiempo*, some 2,000 Christians are affected by the closures. Many of them are presently meeting in private homes for prayer and Bible study.

Church leaders say commanders of the Tenth Front of the FARC ordered pastors in Arauquita to close their churches because, they allege, evangelical Christians support presidential candidate Alvaro Uribe Velez.

Awaiting election results

Colombia held presidential elections on May 26. At press time, Uribe was leading the polls, followed by moderate candidate Horacio Serpa. Uribe, a conservative, has said that, if elected, he will escalate military action against the guerrillas.

"There appears to be some confusion of a political nature here," Rev. Juan Carlos Monsalve of the Worldwide Missionary Movement church, told *El Tiempo*. "The FARC heard rumors that we are supporting Alvaro Uribe, but we are not interested in politics. We would never take up arms to defend ourselves, because we are armed with the Word of God."

Although the churches were closed in mid-April, the incident did not come to the attention of local authorities until May 8. That day, Hidalí Carreño Chávez, municipal ombudsman of Arauquita in charge of monitoring human rights violations, received the first complaint regarding FARC pressure on local churches.

400 churches forced to close

Carreño condemned the threats against the evangelicals and categorized the FARC action as a violation of religious freedom.

This is not the first time Marxist guerrillas have shut down churches, says Ricardo Esquivia, director of the Human Rights and Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia (CEDECOL). According to CEDECOL estimates, some 400 evangelical congregations — most of them in small towns and rural areas — have had to close their doors since the onset of Colombia's unremitting civil warfare.

In some cases, like Arauquita, guerrilla groups charge Christian churches with carrying on "anti-revolutionary activities" and use that pretext for forcing them to close. In other instances, intense combat between the rebels, the army and paramilitary units has forced pastors to suspend worship services to ensure the safety of congregational members.

Esquivia told Compass that, on June 4, CEDECOL representatives will travel to the department (state) of Arauca, where Arauquita is located, to discuss the situation with leaders of the evangelical churches there. He is hopeful that a meeting with FARC commanders can also be arranged, in order to negotiate an end to the ban on public worship.

A risky business

Negotiating with guerrillas is a risky business. In April, guerrillas of the National Liberation Army (ELN) abducted two priests who were attempting to visit hostages held by the guerrillas when they were kidnaped. At press time, Gonzalez and Carreño remain captives of the ELN.

The CEDECOL Human Rights Commission has experience in negotiations with guerrilla groups, achieving some limited success.

"We've held talks with insurgents in Bolivar, Chocó and other areas of the country," Esquivia said. "We try to make them understand that Christians are neutral in this conflict, and therefore they should allow our churches to operate freely.

"On the other hand, we have also encouraged pastors to open their churches to the community, to get involved in social ministries. One of the criticisms the guerrillas level against evangelical churches is that we are not involved enough in social causes."

Last year, CEDECOL leaders met with FARC leadership in San Vicente de Caguán, capital of the "de-militarized zone" the rebels controlled at that time. At the meeting, guerrilla chiefs promised to respect the religious rights of evangelical Christians. The FARC Tenth Front apparently is not honoring that agreement.

Esquivia said most of the congregations in Arauquita affected by the closures belong to the Worldwide Missionary Movement, the Four Square Church, the Pentecostal Church and the Christian Union Movement.

New Chinese religious policy same old story

CHINA (Compass) — Following the major religious affairs conference in Beijing last December, a copy of new religious regulations for Jiangsu province has leaked overseas, providing an opportunity for a serious assessment of Beijing's present policies on religion. The Jiangsu provincial regulations that were passed on February 5 — and become effective June 1 — are probably typical of others to come.

China watchers say this new document of 45 regulations leads to the conclusion that it is an unimaginative reiteration of well-worn ideology leading to tighter bureaucratic control instead of an innovative new policy with a much needed liberalization in Chinese Communist Party (CCP) religious policy. The role of the government in maintaining control of religious affairs is a continuation of policy guidelines laid down in 1982 by the Central Committee of the CCP. The future for religious believers who for reasons of conscience feel unable to accept these restrictive regulations looks dark if the rules are strictly implemented.

"Freedom of religious belief" as narrowly defined by the CCP is still only officially enjoyed by the five major religions of Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism. Only the "patriotic" religious organizations receive any official recognition.

No mention of independent house churches

No mention is made of independent house churches or the possibility of them registering directly with the government. The distinct impression is given that no major changes will be made to the present system under which all religious believers have to belong to religious organizations controlled by the patriotic associations if they wish to be legally recognized by the government.

The notorious "Three Fixes," which have been a straitjacket for the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the only recognized church in China, are still in force. They read:

"The names of all religious workers must be filed with their Religious Affairs Bureau. Individuals who are not approved or filed are not allowed to engage in any religious activities under the title of religious worker." (Article 13)

Ministry severely limited

"All religious activities have to be conducted within the confines of religious sites lawfully registered." (Article 14)

"Preachers cannot go outside their own area to evangelize or preach without first 'filing with the relevant Religious Affairs Bureau.'" (Article 15)

Thus the CCP seeks to prevent lay ministry and all unregistered house church activity.

Ministry within the TSPM churches is severely limited. The regulations define permitted "religious activities" narrowly as certain rites such as "praying, reading scripture, giving sermons, observing religious holidays and holding funeral services, etc."

All mention of religion as an all-encompassing way of life — which includes, for Christians, evangelism, the teaching and training of children and youth and showing social concern — is excluded.

Indonesia: government reins in Laskar Jihad

INDONESIA — In a shocking turn of events, the radical Laskar Jihad has been banned from the Malukus and its combative leader placed under arrest, reports Christian Aid Mission.

Jafar Umar Thalib, head of the militant Laskar Jihad, was arrested and brought in for questioning by the Indonesia National Police when he landed at Surabaya on his way back to Jakarta from Ambon on May 4. He was charged with inciting Muslims to violence in the attack on Soya village, a 20-minute drive from Ambon City, April 28 in which 14 people were killed, about 30 homes of Christians burned, and the Soya Protestant church burned for the second time.

Violence claims 9,000 lives

The violence in the Malukus that has claimed 9,000 lives and left 700,000 homeless since 1999 is not solely the result of local inter-religious violence. Outsiders are accused of fomenting the trouble.

A representative of the local council of bishops told the *Jakarta Post* that the perpetrators of the April 28 attack "didn't use the local language, and that no Ambonese would have the capability of destroying a village in such a short time."

The main outside group fomenting trouble in the Malukus is said to be the Jakarta based Laskar Jihad that declared war on Christians in the Malukus in April 2000 and up until now moved throughout the region with impunity.

Thankfully for Christians, the government has now banned the Laskar Jihad from the Malukus, although how the government will oversee its evacuation is another matter. It is estimated to have about 9,000 members, but no one knows how much actual support it has among Moluccan Muslims.

Local Christians and Muslims signed the Malino II peace accord brokered by the government on February 12, but Thalib denounced it. The accord called for Muslims and Christians to turn in their arms, and Christians of Soya village were among those that did that. But Thalib reportedly urged a crowd of several thousand at the Alfatah Mosque in Ambon April 26 to take up "guns and spears and daggers" and fight the Christians. The attack on Soya came about 36 hours later.

Fight to the last drop of blood

Then in a radio speech broadcast May 1-3 he told Maluku Muslims to "write out their wills...get out all your weapons...[and] fight against them [the Christians] to the last drop of blood."

Some Muslim groups are protesting Thalib's detention, and are insisting that the Christian separatist movements, the FKM (Maluku Sovereignty Front) and the South Maluku Republic (RMS), first be disbanded. In addition, Vice-President Hamaz Haz's visit to Thalib in prison lent him more legitimacy than he deserves and is causing a serious breach with President Magawati Sukarnoputri.

Meanwhile, Christian Aid is assisting some of the hundreds of thousands of Christians displaced from their homes by the Maluku violence by helping to provide food, clothing, medical help and simple family shelters.

From the Missions Insider Report by Christian Aid. For more information, visit: ***www.christianaid.org***

Bucking previous trends, 'demand for religion' on the rise in Canada

Ferdy Baglo

VANCOUVER, (ENI) — Flying in the face of previous surveys, a recent study by Canada's foremost religion pollster suggests that Canada is undergoing a period of spiritual renewal, both inside and outside its churches.

A survey of 3,500 Canadians found that weekly church attendance was up, the core membership of churches had stabilized and the large number of people who attended church only irregularly were not "deserting the ship". The trend held true particularly among mainline Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Church of Canada and Roman Catholic churches.

"If we use cold marketing language, there has been a demand for religion," said Reginald Bibby, who holds a research chair in sociology at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta and has monitored religious trends in Canada every five years since the 1970s.

Bibby's most recent findings, based on a survey conducted in 2000, suggest that a 30-year downward trend in church attendance has been halted, and that youth attendance has rebounded.

More than 80 per cent of those polled said they believed in God; 75 per cent said they prayed at least occasionally; 73 per cent admitted to having spiritual needs; 68 per cent believed in life after death; 65 per cent believed in heaven.

"God continues to do well in the polls," said Bibby, whose results for 2000 appear in Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada, published by Stoddart Publishing, Toronto.

Bibby said that he was surprised by the findings because earlier surveys had pointed to a waning of religious influence in Canada.

Experiencing revitalization

"Groups like the United Church and Anglicans may be joining the evangelicals in experiencing revitalization," said the sociologist, who also found considerable vitality "among Catholics and a variety of other world faiths".

Among new developments, Bibby found renewed interest in organized religion among teenagers, which he attributed to direct efforts made by churches and other religious institutions to appeal to them.

"Religious groups are doing a much more aggressive job of targeting and ministering to young people. Churches are making youth ministry, ministry to young adults and to children a much higher priority than in the past."

Bibby claimed the future of the churches rested with the 18-to-34-year-old segment of the population, who, he said, represented a relatively committed core and tended to bring their children to church.

Another trend the researcher has followed is public confidence in religious institutions, which seems to be holding up. In the mid-1980s, Canadians' confidence in organized religion plummeted with the emergence of scandals involving deposed TV preachers and sexual abuse at church-run schools, he said.

But even at a time when confidence in religious leaders fell, attendance at church did not drop correspondingly.

"People were no less inclined to turn to religious [institutions] for rites of passage such as baptism, marriage, and so on," Bibby said.

Not all of the findings are so upbeat.

CHRISTIAN COURIER PHOTO

Dr. Reginald Bibby

His survey suggests that religious devotion among the largely French-speaking population in Quebec — which accounts for 25 per cent of the country's population, or more than seven million people — has dropped significantly.

In the 1950s attendance among those surveyed stood at 86 per cent; in 1990, it had fallen to 26 per cent; and in the latest survey, it had dropped again, to 14 per cent.

However, Bibby says, "What is intriguing about Quebecers is that they are not open to switching to another tradition — they still see themselves as Catholics."

According to Bibby's calculations, of Canada's population of 30 million, 19 per cent are self-professed mainline Protestants; 8 per cent evangelical Protestants; 23 per cent of Canadians outside of Quebec and 19 per cent of those in Quebec are Roman Catholics; six per cent are Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists. Those who claim no religious affiliation account for 20 per cent of the population.

Absolute numbers indicate that since 1970, Islam and Sikhism have been growing in Canada, chiefly because of immigration, adding to the diversity of Canada's religious scene.

The first Canadian census, conducted in 1871, reported that two per cent of Canadians identified themselves with faiths other than Christianity. Bibby found it "astounding" that as of the official Canadian 1991 census, that figure had increased to only about four per cent, and in his own survey, it had only grown to six per cent.

"The difficulty for minority faiths is to hold on to their kids," said Bibby. "Of teenagers who came from Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist or [other] homes — by the time they were 15 to 19 years old, about 10 per cent of them were identifying themselves as Christians."

Asked about ecumenical trends, Bibby told ENI he had researched people's attitudes towards worshiping in religious settings different from their own and had found "a big cleavage between mainliners and evangelicals.

"Mainliners are acting like they are very receptive to worshiping in varied settings, but there is a reluctance to worship in settings that appear somewhere to the right theologically." Similarly, conservative evangelicals are reluctant to worship in liberal churches.

Pastor wants end to ban on U.S. church political activity

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (Coral Ridge Ministries News) — Dr. D. James Kennedy, senior minister of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church and president of Coral Ridge Ministries, will testify tomorrow on behalf of a measure to repeal an almost 50-year-old ban on "political activity" by churches.

Kennedy will testify before the House Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee on behalf of the "Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act" (H.R. 2357), a measure that amends current tax law to allow houses of worship to participate or intervene in a political campaign. Rep. Walter Jones (NC) introduced the measure one year ago. It has been cosponsored by 114 members of Congress.

"I feel this legislation is a vitally important step in reversing a long-standing injustice, whereby free speech seems to be protected everywhere, except in the pulpits of our churches and other houses of worship," said Dr. Kennedy. "In a culture like ours, which sometimes seems on moral-life support, the voice of the church and her message of reconciliation, virtue, and hope is more important now than ever before. Yet the current law (enacted by Lyndon Johnson) has effectively silenced the church. We are a poorer nation for it."

Lyndon Johnson was responsible

The current ban on political activity by nonprofit organizations dates to 1954, and has nothing to do with the alleged constitutional requirement for a wall of separation between church and state. At that time, then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson found himself facing intense opposition from nonprofit groups in his bid for re-election. To cure his problem, Johnson submitted an amendment on the Senate floor to ban all nonprofit groups from engaging in election activity. Without hearings or public debate, his amendment passed the Senate on a voice vote, and became law.

Johnson's revision of the federal tax code was targeted at the organizations contesting his seat, but churches were caught up in the ban. In just minutes and without debate, churches were stripped of their liberty to participate in America's political life.

"The First Amendment states that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,...'" said Dr. Kennedy. "Yet that is exactly what the Congress has done by silencing churches."

"Along with the more than 50,000 friends of Coral Ridge Ministries, who have signed petitions in favor of the Houses of Worship Political Speech Protection Act, it is my fervent hope that Congress will act quickly to repeal this IRS 'gag order' on churches and other houses of worship."

More than three million people watch or listen to Dr. D. James Kennedy on the television and radio programs of Coral Ridge Ministries each week. Coral Ridge Ministries has also established the Center for Reclaiming America, which works to motivate people of faith to defend and implement Biblical principles, and the Center for Christian Statesmanship, a spiritually based outreach to men and women in positions of influence and authority in Washington, D.C.

Converts boost ranks of Orthodox Christians

(Religion Today) — According to an article in Sunday's *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, Orthodoxy in America is "emerging from generations of repression" and has "a corps of new converts who are eager to carry the faith into the future."

St. Vladimir's Seminary in Crestwood, N.Y., which serves the Orthodox Church in America, has about 100 students, but few of them were raised in the United States. According to the *Post-Gazette* report, most are either converts or foreign-born. The rest are sons of priests. The dean of the seminary attributes this trend to an overall decline in people entering mainline Protestant ministry.

Converts to Orthodoxy do not make up for the decline, says the dean, but they are providing "a new generation of leaders." Among those who have embraced Orthodoxy, according to the report, are "former Roman Catholics who prefer Orthodox church government, mainline Protestants who want historic theology, Protestant evangelicals in search of mysticism and Pentecostals who want liturgy to support religious experience."

Opinion

Conversing about conversion

Bert Hielema

I've got an interesting problem on my hands. How do I bring a dear friend the Good News? Each month I have lunch with him, a professor emeritus in Psychology of Concordia University in Montreal.

He was born in that city, and he is 84 now. His parents are Jewish and came from Russia close to 100 years ago. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Minnesota and a graduate degree from the University of New York. A splendid man. A *Mensch*. In his mother tongue, Yiddish, the word "mensch" means "a person — of either gender — who is decent, kind, honest, a good person, who is fully human and fully humane, and always acts with complete integrity."

Jesus was a "mensch." He calls himself as such. "The Son of Man" literally means to be fully human. Thus being a "mensch" is the highest compliment that can be accorded to a person.

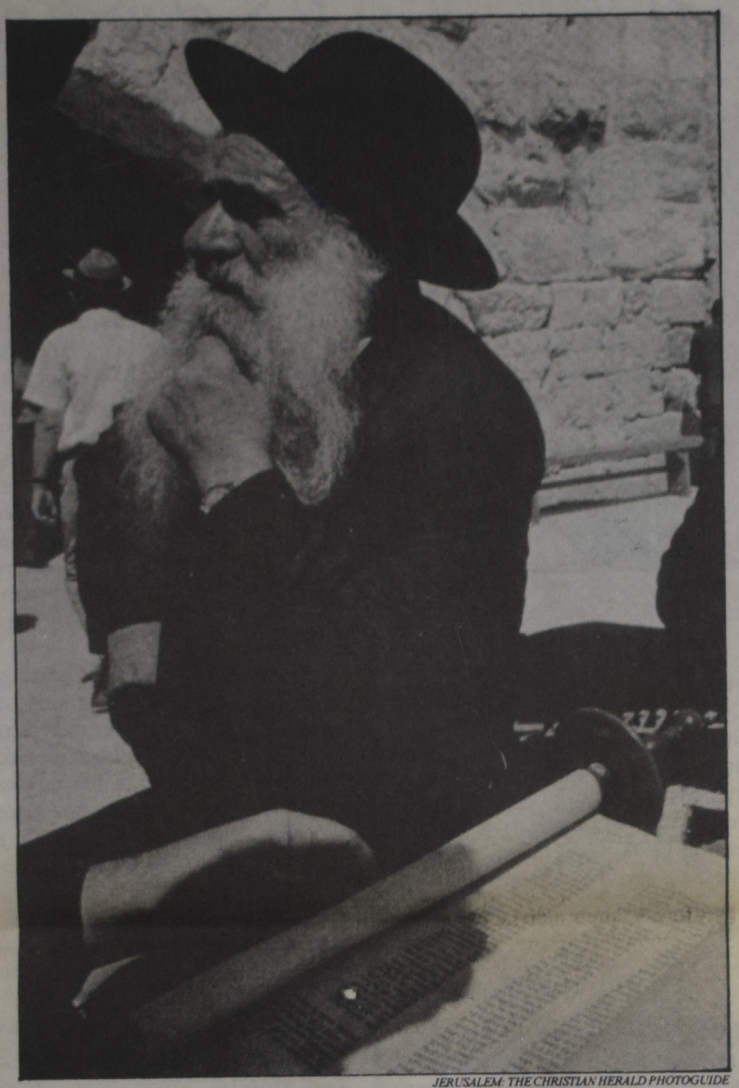
Counted as righteousness?

My question — and I have no definite answer to this — when a person sincerely tries to be such a "mensch", is that desire given to him or her by Jesus, even though they don't know him, and is this counted to them as righteousness?

My Jewish friend has always has been socially active, was chosen "Educator of the Year" in Belleville a few years ago. After retiring from university teaching, he gave guidance to young people in that city, those whom the system had more or less abandoned as incurable. No charge. He also started an early education centre — named after his only granddaughter — which now has a budget of $400,000 and gives young, often single, mothers a place to bring their preschool kids while they either work or study.

I met him when I spoke on a panel in Belleville about eight years ago. My presentation impressed him, so he stayed behind to talk. I invited him to join our "boys' club". A couple of times per year, three or four of us men meet in Cobourg over dinner and chat about anything and everything for three or more hours. After meeting many times with this group of Calvinist to the Core Christians, believing in total depravity, he too has become a Calvinist convert on that score anyway. Also, as a professional psychologist, with a deep insight into human nature, he agrees on original sin.

Now his health is frail. He sees death's door. He called me four months ago. Wanted a tête à tête, so we met for two hours over lunch.



JERUSALEM: THE CHRISTIAN HERALD PHOTOGUIDE

Hielema writes: "We need a new approach to religion that can include all people: Jews especially, but also the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's other son, and Native people as well, including those who struggle with environmental questions in the Far East."

He paid that time. I did the next. When we were there, a lot of people stopped to say hello to him. He wanted to talk about death and what happens after that. In the many meetings we had with the others — all of Reformed persuasion — we prayed aloud before the meal and talked freely about our convictions; yet he never showed a great deal of interest in spiritual matters. Now that his heart is failing and each morning is a day of grace, knowing where I stand and what I believe, he questions me. So we talk.

Skeptical of the Old Testament

He puts me on the spot. Tell me, you life-long Christian readers: how do we evangelize in this day and age? What is the Good News today? Should I urge him to go to church? Advise him to read the Bible? He is no dummy: he read the March issue of *Harper's Magazine*, in which an article appears that refutes the historical basis of the Old Testament characters. According to that article, recent archeological finds do not at all seem to confirm the existence of such familiar figures as Abraham, or the presence in Egypt of the children of Jacob, or even prove that King David ever lived. So he is skeptical about the Old Testament with which he is familiar.

He asks me my reaction to this *Harper* article, which I have read also. My answer is that the Bible is not a book of history. That we cannot use it to prove anything. To me the Bible tells me that God created the world "in the beginning", whenever that was. It points the way to eternal salvation: creation, fall, redemption, new creation. He was raised a Reform Jew, occasionally attends the local synagogue and reads a Jewish Magazine "TIKKUN" which is Hebrew for ... "to heal, repair and transform the world; all the rest is commentary" — a message we Christians have neglected to pursue.

So we come to the touchy point of redemption: the Messiah. I am always moved when in L.A., where our daughter lives in a Jewish part of town with 10 synagogues within walking distance, I see a decal on the car bumper: The Messiah is coming! I tell him that I believe that he has come and has set us free to enter the New Creation. I also tell him that Christ is the perfect "Mensch", the only one ever. He strives to be that sort of a person.

Over the years I have been buying a lot of books written by Jewish rabbis and scholars. One the latest is called *Dancing with God: everyday steps to Jewish spiritual renewal*. The Jews too struggle with people with little interest in their religion and marrying outside the faith. There Rabbi Wayne Dosick, cites a Hebrew prayer, which I have memorized: "Baruch Atah Adonai, Elohenu melech haolam, hamotzie lechem min ha'aratz," which means: "Praised are you, O Eternal, our God, Ruler of the Universe and Source of all being, who brings forth bread from the earth." It is normally recited before starting to eat. So I prayed this Jewish prayer with him before we ate last week. From there on we talked about spirituality. From my readings, I am wondering whether all religions are missing the boat today, including our Reformed one.

New approach to religion

I am sure that God has placed this man on my path for a certain reason, both for my salvation and his. We need a new approach to religion that can include all people: Jews especially, but also the descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's other son, and Native people as well, including those who struggle with environmental questions in the Far East. I, myself, am increasingly uncomfortable with the complacency in Christianity, or, for that matter, in any form of religiosity of whatever stripe. I feel in my guts that what we need is a new basis by which to approach to religion, one that is ecumenical, where all major streams, be that Jewish or Islam or Buddhist, can find a common ground.

We all live in the same world, all breathe the same air, our atoms are constantly exchanged. In God's house, his creation, are many rooms, more than one way to enjoy God's presence. Redemption is not confined to Christianity. There are millions and billions of people who have never heard of God through no fault of their own. God is a merciful God. I have been re-affirmed in that feeling by a book with the provocative title, *The Lost Gospel of the Earth*. In it, the author, Tom Hayden, himself a lapsed Roman Catholic, writes that "we divide grace from nature and spirit from matter at our peril. When we worship God above, the earth withers from neglect below. We develop a society where everything from human habits to politics and economics exploits the environment with callous indifference. Unless the nature of the State is harmonized with the state of Nature, our greed and ignorance will eventually take us beyond the capacity of the very ecosystems that support human existence."

This passage conveys the essence of the book, in which Hayden exposes how all major religions — Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Native Traditions — have left their roots, firmly planted in creation, in favor of dualistic thinking, splitting nature from grace, spirit from matter in order to accommodate and rationalize our destructive approach to luxurious living. Wrote a Jewish rabbi in the Afterword: "Most people no longer understand what the Hebrew Scriptures meant by the word prophet. These 'seers' were noted less for seeing the future than for seeing the truth, for understanding the deeper meaning, the holistic view, the spiritual message of the present moment. Shedding unblinking light on the pain and injustice of the present, the prophet calls, Sh'ma — 'hear' but also more deeply 'understand,' and deepest of all and intrinsically linking action to understand, 'heed'."

Only part of God's revelation

Another Rabbi, Lew Barth — no relation to Karl — has said that "idolatry is not worshiping the wrong god, but rather worshiping only one part of the greater reality and calling that god." So, when I talked to my searching Jewish friend, who faithfully reads my weekly column in the *Belleville Intelligencer*, portions of which you often find also in my "Nose" page, I kept that in mind. The Bible is only part of God's revelation — not to be idolized as the entire Word. As we speed toward the End, to a New Beginning, where the Scriptures no longer count, we must prepare ourselves for the Day when the Creation and Christ are the only words of God we have: the true inexhaustible, infallible, infinite words, then our only source of eternal interest. Yes, I did quote the Bible to him. I quoted John 3:16: God so loved the world, the cosmos, that he sacrificed himself to buy it back from the great Evil One. He knows I believe in a life after death, what I call " my real life."

I detect a growing renewal movement in many religious

communities seeking to reclaim the underlying spirituality that was their original foundation. Also there are many people, my Jewish friend included, who seek to connect to that spirituality, independent of traditional religious communities. Let me quickly add that I am happy in our local church, where I am an elder, never miss a service, prepare the weekly church bulletin, sing in the choir, attend a weekly prayer meeting and to which we give liberally. There still is a valuable place for the church. Our church is like most CR churches with its share of very committed members, with some who only attend services, nothing else, and some "occasioners." What I miss, and notice in only a few, is that there is little desire to go beyond the tried and proven, little desire to struggle and seek real spirituality, which is typified by:

1) a feeling of awe, of wonder, and radical amazement when contemplating the universe — a feeling that arouses in me a continuing joyous experience of love and connection to the world, and to others.

2) a recognition that there is a Creator God who is the ultimate unity of all Being, and through faith in Him, I recognize the preciousness of the earth and the sanctity of every living creature on the planet.

Fulfiling the law

Without mentioning the place, I also told him the words of Paul (Romans 13:8): "They who love their neighbors have fulfilled the law." In his entire life my friend has practiced that concept better than I have or any other Christian person I know. I then said that God, in his goodness, has picked me to be his child. I quoted his compatriot, Einstein, to whom a saying is attributed: "If a printing plant — in the old days with letter setters — would blow up and come to earth in the form of the Encyclopedia Britannica that would not be as miraculous as the world being formed spontaneously through evolution." I emphasized that more and more people believe in a Creator, especially as more and more intricate instruments, instead of clarifying mysteries, multiply the unknown.

Salvation outside the church

For a long time I believed that there was no salvation outside the church. I am revising my opinion, believing that most churches no longer bring the Good News, have no idea of what the Second Coming really means. Sorry, I cannot send a man like this, erudite, well-read, to a church. WWJD? What would Jesus Do, who also often chatted with people over a meal? Eating together creates a sort of communion: eating together, digesting food and thoughts and breathing in the same air. "Where two or three are together...." We don't need large crowds to bring the gospel.

But, and here comes his ultimate question: if humans are unable to fix the awful muddle we have created, who or what will restore this chaos? Or does the world expire and disappear without a trace? No, he couldn't believe that either. So then what? Roman 1:20 comes to mind, where it says that God's glory is visible through things he has made, so all people who breathe and eat have no excuse. To me this also means that the opposite is true: where people have seen the Great Designer in his creation, they have a valid excuse when they appear before the throne of judgment. Even if they have never heard of Christ. If they have been fully human, fully "mensch" fully been, to their utmost capacity with all the will power and intention they can muster, a neighbor-loving creature, then they are to be judged worthy to be part of God's eternal kingdom. There. That's what I think. That's what I told him.

Did I go wrong somewhere? Let me know.

A special rate is available to first-time subscribers to *Christian Courier*:

$25 for one year.

Friends of CC have made this special offer possible. For more information, call us at: 1-800-969-4838.

Unfaithful

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

"Steamy."
"Amazing."
"Stunning."
"Shocking."
"Scorching."
"Provocative."
"Outstanding."
"Unforgettable."

These are the words a local newspaper used to describe the film *Unfaithful*. Very few of them apply at face value. Much of the story is simplistic and without depth. The sexual activity between the two lovers lacks sensuality and is demeaning and self-serving. And yet, the film has value if we are able to see beyond the director's attempt at Hollywood sensationalism.

Patterns of marital infidelity

Frank Pittman, author of *Private Lies: Infidelity and the Betrayal of Intimacy*, has found most affairs can be lumped into four patterns. First is the accidental infidelity in which the affair happens quite "by accident." They are incidents that happen outside the usual patterns of behavior and the individuals involved know they are doing something wrong. The second is the "philandering" group. For them sexual activity outside marriage is more "natural." They are often driven by lust for the opposite sex. The third group is the "romantic affairs" in which the partners are in a crazy "love-in" state that clouds people's minds and makes them "forget" their marriages and families. The fourth is the "marital arrangement" group in which there is often emotional and/or sexual distance between the marital partners. These affairs range from "sexual supplements" to "flamboyant revenge" which keeps marriages in states of intense passion and jealousy.

The torment of the uninvolved spouse

The film *Unfaithful* is about a bored wife and mother who unexpectedly meets a smooth talking philanderer. The first part is about the woman's relationship with her husband, son and philanderer. Her husband is a successful if somewhat aggressive businessman who loves his wife. Her son is a typical beguiling Hollywood child who has a good life. The philanderer is a charming and pretentious young man who calculatingly stirs the emotional side of her that is often lost in everyday life. The story line so far is typical. The woman's accidental meeting with a girlfriend, who confides she had an affair and would do anything to undo it, however, sets the stage for a painful chain of reactions

The second part of the film is about the husband's torment by his wife's infidelity, the tragic consequences and the eventual impact it will have on the rest of their lives. This is the valuable part of the film. The husband's discovery of the affair and his eventual "crime of passion," while rarely acted upon in real life, effectively portrays the torment of the uninvolved spouse in marital infidelity.

No one is an island

When the husband discovers the affair, his world turns upside down. He is shocked and disoriented. He finds himself wandering in the neighborhood of the philanderer. He sees his wife's car and stares numbly at the building she must be in. He watches her leave. Eventually, he comes face to face with her lover.

We also learn that prayer and close relationships with extended family are part of the couple's life. The joy, fellowship and merriment around their son's birthday lies in stark contrast to the couple's sordid secret. Any disruption in their world will affect those who are part and parcel of their lives.

As the film ends, it is the answer to "what do we tell our son?" that encourages them to find a way they can live with the consequences of the affair. The director, however, challenges the audience to figure it out. We do. We then realize the best description of the film is — a *warning* about the pains of infidelity and the wish it could be undone. And this comes out of Hollywood? A*mazing!*

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

Editor's note re. *Conversing about conversion*

Bert's article will surely raise some hackles among CC readers. It is not "Calvinist to the core"; in fact, it sounds like he's jumping aboard the pluralist bandwagon, which says that all religions are equally valid, as long as you're sincere and a good neighbor to others.

Although I don't agree with it, I think Bert's position is more subtle. Christ's atonement on the cross is still necessary, but people don't participate in it by simply confessing their faith in him as their Savior; they do so, instead, by living it. What looms large in that saving lifestyle, according to Bert, is the kind of respect for the earth that he hammers on in his Nose column. However, his description of the atonement as a buying back of the cosmos from Satan strikes me as inadequate – if not dualistic.

Was Bert converted?

About 30 years ago, the theme of "anonymous Christianity" was widely discussed in World Council circles. Bert's position seems to fall under this category. But notice that he is posing a question. So rather than write a letter lambasting Bert and calling him a heretic, let's address the issues he raises. That's why I agreed to publish Bert's article; it raises questions asked by many others within and without the church.

Let me add some questions of my own: In evangelizing his Jewish neighbor was Bert himself converted to a form of (liberal) Judaism? How does Bert avoid reducing Christianity to nothing more than an ethical call and Jesus to little more than an ethical model? How do the thief on the cross and the prostitute fare in this model, or the nasty peasant in Brazil who is burning the rain forest to scratch out a living for himself and his family?

I agree with Bert that anyone who has been fully human, who has fully fulfilled the radical requirements of the law, is redeemed. However, I thought that the teaching of original sin, which Bert professes, means that the only human being who achieved such perfection was Jesus. Would God have sent his only begotten Son to die for us if people like Bert and his admirable neighbor can exercise sufficient will-power to overcome their fallen condition on their own?

But perhaps I'm misunderstanding our friend Bert....

The editor

Reflection

One dress, two shoes

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Ever since I can remember, I've loved to count. Anything and everything: black seeds in bright red Macintosh apples, the muted colors in my mom's heavy wool table covering, the vibrant green leaves of our tree-like benjamina plant, and the numbers on the oak face of the clock my parents inherited from a distant uncle.

"What will I outgrow?" I asked Mom after Marta left. I could tell she was hiding something from me. "I want to know!"

I was five years old the day I realized that there are some things people don't like you to count, and then announce. I had a cold so I didn't go to school with my sisters. Instead, I rested on the living room couch. Finally, restless, I got up, opened the living room door, and went to the kitchen to get a drink of orange juice.

Mom sat at the table with her friend Marta. The sun shone on Marta's pale face. Three hairs protruded from her prominent chin. Having always believed that only men grew beards, I said, "Marta has three hairs in her beard!"

Mom looked horrified. Marta glared at me, her thick hand now cupping her chin. Quickly, Mom poured a glass of juice and hustled me back to the couch, leaving the living room door ajar when she returned to the kitchen.

"She'll outgrow it," I heard Mom say. At first I thought she was talking about the blue jeans that I received from Marta's daughter.

"You never know," Marta said with a worried voice. "Some children never outgrow bad habits."

Bad habits? I thought. Suddenly, I got scared. If Mom wasn't talking about my jeans, what was she refering to?

"What will I outgrow?" I asked Mom after Marta left.

"Oh, nothing," Mom said. Her cheeks flushed.

I could tell she was hiding something from me. "I want to know!" I shouted.

"That is one shout too many!" Mom exclaimed. When she was angry, Mom always started counting back at me. "All right, I'll tell you," she sighed when she noticed my tears. "Your counting."

I gasped. "I will not outgrow my counting!" I yelled. "I love counting things!"

"And I love it that you love to count," Mom said, her voice surprisingly tender. "But Brenda, you shouldn't always announce what you count."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because you might embarrass and annoy people."

I looked at Mom, perplexed.

"Remember the time you counted Mrs. Arenchevsky's varicose veins and told her she had ten snakes on her legs. And the time you counted the black hairs in Grandpa's nose."

"Yes," I answered.

"They didn't appreciate that," Mom explained.

"But I wasn't trying to be rude, Mom. I just love to count!"

In a sea of countless black-haired people, our blonde hair gleamed like a lighthouse's beam.

Years later, when I was nine years old, I still counted things in the world around me, oblivious to the decision my parents had made, one I had never counted on. Dad told me about it as he drove me to my friend's house: our family would be leaving Canada for four years because he had accepted a position as a missionary to Korea. That night I excitedly started the countdown on my Canadian Tire calendar: one hundred and eleven days till our departure on August 26, 1965. Each school day I stored away in my dresser drawer the one candy Mom gave me along with my cheese sandwich and apple, saving them up just in case there were no candies in Korea. I knew nothing of the land and people which would dramatically shape my life and teach me to count in a new way.

During our first week in Korea, Mr. Stellar, another missionary, steered his Landrover Jeep from our home to the crowded streets of Seoul. Mom and Dad sat in the front with him while my four sisters, brother, and I bounced along in the back till we arrived at Namdaemun Market. In a sea of countless black-haired people, our blonde hair gleamed like a lighthouse's beam.

The market stalls swelled with baskets of food. I recognized some fruits: red apples, yellow pears, blushing peaches, and green grapes. Mr. Stellar told us what the others were: mandarin oranges, small and sweet with loose rinds, orange-red persimmons, and golden quinces. He pointed out vegetables used for cooking, oils, and medicine, and various nuts: walnuts, chestnuts, pine nuts and ginkgo nuts. He showed us raw fish with bulging life-like eyes, and dried fish with shriveled death-like eyes. The smells, the sights and sounds, and the textures of the market thrilled me.

Within a month Miss Kim came to work for us. In Canada, Mom would never have considered hiring a maid, but amongst the missionary families it was a common practice. Day after day, Miss Kim did the marketing, laundry, and housework. She always wore the same western-style dress, a yellow sack-shaped gown gathered at the waist with a green belt. One dress. And on her feet she always wore a pair of flat black shoes which she deposited at the door whenever she arrived.

KOREA, ASIA NEWS CENTER PHOTOS (3)

I saw Miss Kim quietly get up, carrying her lacquered lunch plate in one hand...

Two shoes.

In the following weeks, I began to count things I had never seen before. Miss Kim, who had mastered the English language while working eight years for another missionary family, explained them to me. I watched two women involved in *noldwigi,* a see-saw game where one woman jumped on a long board which was balanced on a bag of rice straw, sending the other woman as high as possible. Miss Kim explained that this gave isolated women a chance to catch a glimpse of the world outside the high fence surrounding their yards. I observed a *chulssang*, or death procession, as 43 people paraded through a village following a coffin being carried to the graveyard. I noticed the bent backs of two farmers and their wives harvesting rice from the terraced rice paddies on the side of the mountain where we resided.

Then winter came. And with it I experienced a growing unease. The tranquillity I felt at first in the Land of the Morning Calm, as Korea is called, slipped away.

I was home alone when the first beggar came to our door. Such a surge of pity filled me that I gave all the *won* from Mom's wallet to him. Not till that evening, when Mom discovered the disappearance of her weekly grocery money, did I understand the beggar's deep bow and the joy on his wrinkled face.

I began to count beggars, men and women who I hadn't noticed at first. I counted children, thin and haggard, with too few clothes to ward off winter's bite. I numbered the poor, still suffering the consequences of the Korean War fought only 12 years before between South Korea and North Korea.

One evening in January Mr. Stellar dropped by to ask if my sisters and I would come to the orphanage he worked at. We could cuddle the babies or sing to them, he said, and help out the small staff. Nothing in my protected childhood prepared me for what I saw there. Listless children who had never known consistent love lay in row on row of cribs waiting to be fed or have their soiled diapers changed.

Some of the children responded to our attention with cooing and smiles. But I noticed one lethargic child who never moved. I lifted her out of the crib, sang to her, and cooed in her ear. No response. I desperately wanted to count one

smile, but there was no smile to count. Months later, the memory of that one child remained with me.

In May, before the beginning of the rainy season, Mom planned a picnic and invited Miss Kim to join us. We traveled through the countryside in our jeep. I counted thatched roofs. I lost count of the large earthenware jars, buried up to their necks in the soil, which contained *kimchi*, fermenting cabbages seasoned with salt and ground-up red-hot peppers, mixed with pickled turnips, radishes and cucumbers.

At noon Dad pulled the jeep off the road beside a dry riverbed littered with boulders. We piled out. Mom and Miss Kim set out our picnic lunch on an old blanket. After praying, we dug in. Egg salad sandwiches and potato salad for my family. Rice, *kimchi*, dried kelp, and *bulgogi*, which were strips of marinated beef, for Miss Kim. And, for dessert, apples for everyone.

I ate my lunch ravenously. As I crunched into my apple, I noticed that Miss Kim nibbled at her food. I knew her to be a hearty eater, and wondered at her lack of appetite. When Mom excused us, I ran to a boulder and perched on it.

From there I saw Miss Kim quietly get up, carrying her lacquered lunch plate in one hand and an apple in the other. Her yellow dress flapped in the brisk breeze. As she walked towards a nearby bridge, her black shoes raised puffs of dust in the dry riverbed.

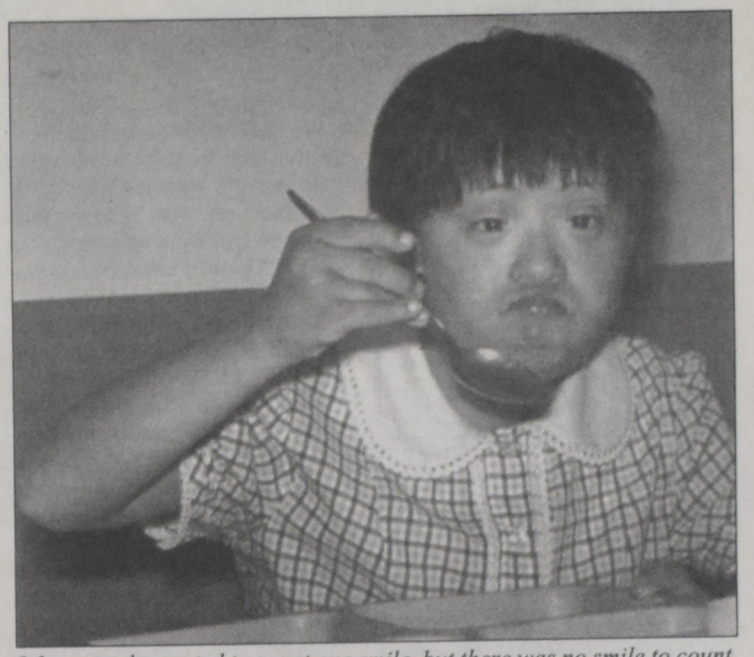
It was then that I saw them. Three haggard men, with weather-beaten faces and grimy clothes, crouching like vultures beneath the bridge. A boy squatted beside them.

Miss Kim bowed slightly to the gnarled men and gaunt child. The men and boy rose slowly. Miss Kim handed the oldest man her lacquered dish with its compartments of rice, *bulgogi, kimchi,* and dried kelp. And she gave the boy her bright red apple. Then she walked back to Mom and Dad.

On the way home I sat beside Miss Kim in the back of the jeep. Somehow, she looked different to me. I wasn't sure why. She wore the same dress, the same shoes as always.

Not till years later did I begin to understand what I witnessed that day, and how it taught me to count in a new way. Miss Kim had counted the poor.

But she had also counted her wealth, so limited in my eyes, and shared it.



I desperately wanted to count one smile, but there was no smile to count. Months later, the memory of that one child remained with me.

Special mothers over the years led by example

Lisa Petsche

Lately, my oldest daughter has been asking about her great-grandmothers. I've been digging out photos and telling her what I can about those on my side of the family.

Unfortunately I didn't know my maternal grandmother, whose name was Mary. She was born in Prince Edward Island on Christmas Day, the younger of two children. Following her marriage to my grandfather (14 years her senior), she moved to southern Ontario where some good friends had settled. She and Grandpa raised a son and a daughter, adopted almost two decades apart. (Not many children were available for adoption in those days, and you were lucky to get even one.)

KEN HEYMAN

Grandma bore 13 children over the next 21 years. That's 10 more than I have — and I feel my hands are full.

Grandma worked full-time

When Grandpa developed a health condition that made it difficult to work at the predominant kinds of labor, Grandma went out and got a full-time job — initially in a grocery store and then a department store. They moved to an apartment building where Grandpa functioned as superintendent, cooked their meals, performed household chores and cared for my mother before and after school (her brother was grown by then).

Grandma liked to cook on weekends and do handwork, including sewing and crocheting. Their home was filled with books because she, like Grandpa, was an avid reader. Also a devout Christian, she was actively involved in her church community.

Her faith sustained her through difficult times, including the accidental death of her brother, the infant death of her first child, an inability to bear more children, and almost losing custody of my mother before her adoption was finalized.

Sadly, Grandma developed cancer and died during Mom's teenage years. She experienced severe pain during her final days in hospital but did her best to conceal it, in an effort to spare loved ones from witnessing her suffering. That's the kind of person she was: concerned about others and courageously accepting of what she couldn't change, trusting in God's goodness and His divine plan for her until her last moment on earth.

One busy lady

My other grandmother, also named Mary, was one of seven children, born and raised in Austria. When she wasn't in school or toiling on the family farm, her social life centred on the village church, attended by her family on Sundays and special occasions.

Grandma came to Canada at age 22, securing employment as a domestic worker in Edmonton, then Montreal, until her marriage a few years later. She bore 13 children over the next 21 years. That's 10 more than I have — and I feel my hands are full. I can't imagine how she managed, especially without the conveniences today's mothers take for granted — such as automatic washers and dryers — and given their modest-sized family home, now considered a starter house.

She was still raising children when my sisters and I were growing up, since my dad was the oldest of her offspring.

Eventually her grandchildren numbered more than 30. She was one busy lady, throughout her life.

Yet she didn't appear frazzled and was never known to complain, despite the self-sacrifice her life involved. In fact, she used to remark how blessed she was to have so many children, all healthy (she had lost a brother and sister to illness when they were 16 months and 13 years old respectively).

When Grandma turned 80 (by then a widow), the family rented a hall for a special celebration. One of her daughters prepared a biography and presented it in *This is Your Life* fashion.

Rich faith and trust in God's provision

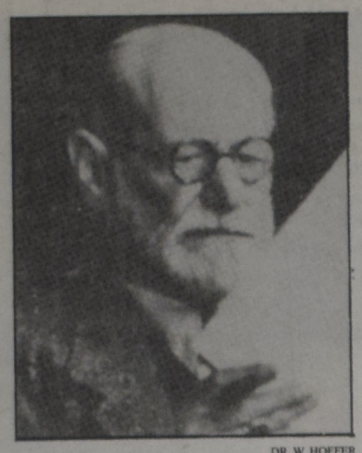
To excerpt: "No doubt your many tiring and strenuous times as a young farm girl back home and out west prepared you for the tremendous challenge and responsibility of caring for so many so well, day after day. Without your rich faith and trust in God's provision, you would be the first to admit you couldn't have done it alone. Tough times made you rely all the more on your Heavenly Father and drew you closer to Him."

What a wonderful legacy of caring, service and faith both my grandmothers left behind. My parents are continuing it.

I hope and pray my children — and future grandchildren — will be able to say the same about me someday, when they're grown.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and freelance writer living in Stoney Creek, Ont.

God builds better people



DR. W. HOFFER

Sigmund Freud (above) dismissed religion as infantile dependency and an illusion.

Walt Brouwer

Before scientists had the ability to objectively measure the impact of spirituality on a person's overall health, religious devotion was considered by many to be detrimental to one's well-being.

As recently as 1979, Frederick Thorne wrote, "*The fact is that to date the real issues never have been laid on the table, and no objective studies of the effects of specific theologies have been tolerated.*" Yet, curiously, he was quick to announce his own unscientific conclusion: "*When confronted with the devastatingly harmful psychological effects of religion, the true scientist cannot avoid coming to grips with the problem.*"

Religion likened to disease

Similarly, though less recent, Bertrand Russell likened religion as "*a disease born of fear and ... a source of untold misery.*"

Sigmund Freud dismissed religion as infantile dependency and an illusion that can only have a deleterious effect on a person's mental health.

Today we have acquired investigative tools to study the effects of religion on a person's health. In fact, the very year Thorne published his unwarranted conclusions about religion's impact on a person's well-being and when I was a student pastor in our nation's capital, a friend of mine was completing his Ph.D. dissertation in psychology at the University of Ottawa. His study empirically demonstrated that spiritual devotion is conducive to positive mental health.

Religious worship eases mental health woes

In March of this year, a study published in the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* announced its findings that religious worship eases mental health woes. This and similar studies point out that building into the rhythm of your week time to meet with others for the purpose of worship has a positive impact on your mental and physical health. Those who attend regular worship services are less depressed, have shorter hospital stays (Ministers of Health, pay attention!), are more content with life and have fewer alcohol problems. Spiritual people are more optimistic, positive, relaxed, and less prone to cancer. Statistically they report fewer cases of heart disease, have stronger immune systems, are better able to handle life's ups and down and generally live longer. (Did I hear Freud turn in his grave?)

The author of this Canadian study, psychiatrist Dr. Marilyn Baetz, admits that in "*psychiatry, we've been always perhaps under the assumption our patients ... use their religion in a negative way.*" I remember some time ago when I was called away from a meeting to go to the hospital to meet with the family of a person who was comatose due to a drug-overdose. When I arrived to be with the family, a psychiatrist was present who kept reassuring the family that the patient was going to be all right. After ministering to the family, the psychiatrist and I left together. As we were walking through the corridors of the hospital to our vehicles, he startled me by saying that he'd like to work with me in the recovery of this patient. The general attitude of psychiatry toward religion has begun to change. And in view of current findings, it should.

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Those who attend regular worship services are less depressed, have shorter hospital stays, and are more content with life.

However, there is another question to this whole matter. Why is it that spiritual devotion tends to enhance a person's overall health? To put it in another way, how is it that God builds better people? Is there a biblical or theological reason for this? The answer is a clear affirmative.

Four key measures of mental health

Psychologists have identified 19 measures of mental health; ten of them positive indicators, nine negative. However, four of these measures are significantly more important than any of the others. In fact, they are more important than the other 15 combined. Here are these four critical measures of mental health: 1. Feeling loved; 2. Past forgiveness; 3. Present meaning; 4. Future hope.

What this means is that when a person feels genuinely loved, has peace with her past, a purpose to live for and a bright future to look forward to, a greater degree of positive mental health is very likely to follow. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that this makes sense. For example, the reason some people cannot get on with the present is because they can't let go of the regrets of the past; if I have absolutely no hope, I will tend to squander the present in harmful ways by abusing drugs, for instance; and so forth.

Vastly greater benefits

Anyone who has a grasp of the gospel and who understands what Jesus Christ came to do recognizes that the four measures of mental health are clear benefits of eternal life which He came to bring. The benefits of eternal life are vastly greater than simply these four aspects of positive mental health. Those who have received eternal life have peace with God, the assurance of heaven, and many, many more benefits. Therefore, we would be wrong to reduce eternal life to emotional and physical enhancement. However, Jesus unmistakably gives to those who trust in him these four benefits of personal well-being in exceedingly great measure.

Inestimable worth

Take the first one, feeling loved. John exclaims for all Christians, "*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!*" He's talking about grace – the gift of being loved not for what you have or for what you do, but for who you are. As a creature made into the image of God you have inestimable and inherent worth. Jesus affirmed that by dying for you, paying for your sins and setting you free.

About past forgiveness: If you are a follower of Christ, then David echoes your joy when he sings, "*Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight!*"

When Paul thinks of his life's journey with Jesus, he says that he has "*purpose in very step.*" When he wrote to Timothy, a budding spiritual leader, to mentor him in ministry competence, he recounted how amazed he was that God could actually use someone like Paul himself, "*the worst of sinners.*" In the very next verse, he responds to this wonder with a heart-felt burst of praise: "*Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever!*" In other words, every one of Paul's days as a lover of Jesus was filled with meaning and opportunities!

And when Titus was feeling the pressures of ministry and the temptations of life, Paul reassures him of "*the blessed hope.*" Indeed, if *anyone* has hope – on this side of eternity *or* the other side – it is the devoted follower of Jesus.

Fools say in their hearts that there is no God and no benefit to trusting Him. Recent studies are proving them wrong. The Bible has from the beginning.

God builds better people.

Walt Brouwer is Pastor of Christ's community at Christ Community (CR) Church, in absolutely beautiful Nanaimo, B.C.

Calvin's Crossing dedicated

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The new pedestrian walkway at Calvin College has an official name. At a service of dedication, held on May 8, the 380-foot span over the East Beltline was christened Calvin's Crossing, according to a Calvin College press release.

To come up with a name, Calvin held a contest that drew about 150 entries, everything from the serious to the sardonic. There were suggestions as simple as Dwight and as silly as Dude, Where's My Overpass. Some suggested naming the structure for Calvin President Gaylen Byker, while others favored naming it after long-time Chaplain Dale Cooper.

In the end a five-person committee chose the descriptive, alliterative, moniker: Calvin's Crossing. The name was submitted by five students each of which earned $100 for the winning suggestion.

Calvin's Crossing was a year in the making and provides a visible and architecturally dramatic link between the existing Calvin campus and the new facilities east of the East Beltline — the DeVos Communication Center and the Prince Conference Center, slated to open in September 2002.

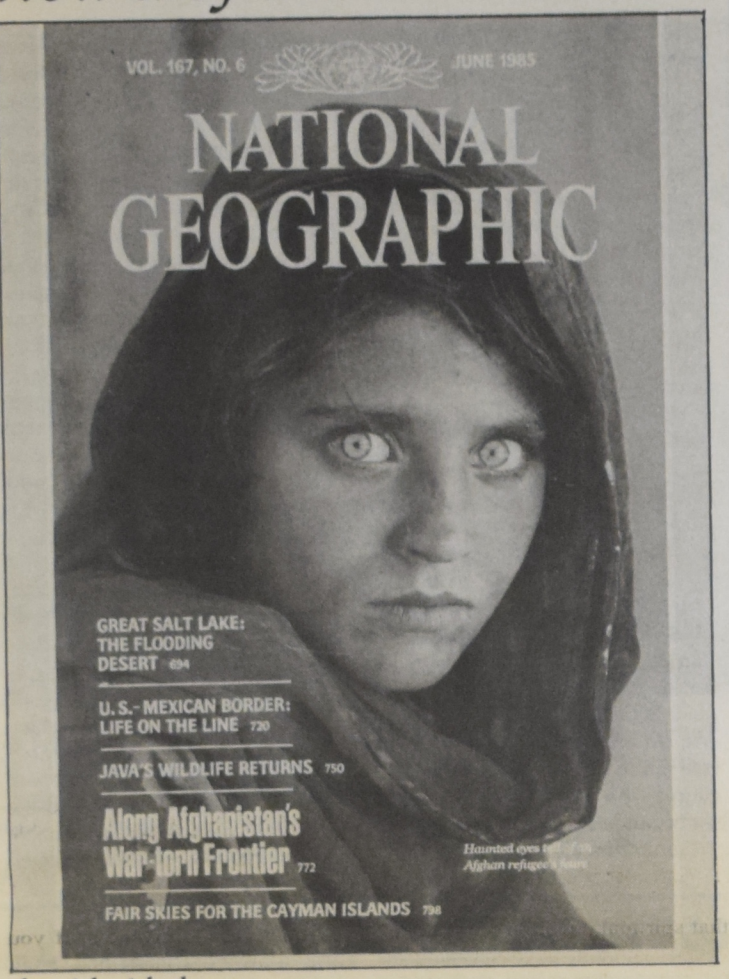
"There's nothing like it," says Calvin vice president Henry DeVries of the new crossing. "It not only will carry people across the East Beltline, it also carries all of the heating and cooling and communications needs for the East campus from the main campus."

It is that second factor that makes the project unique.

"There are other pedestrian overcrossings in the state," says DeVries, "but this one doubles as part of our powerplant. That meant significantly more engineering considerations."

There is a sophisticated snow-melt system on the roof to ensure that chunks of snow and ice do not fall from the roof to the road below. And the entire roof is specially designed as a domed roof with two layers of steel separated by four inches of insulation, thus keeping the inside layer warm and the outside layer cold. The crossing is 20 feet above the road at its highest point, providing plenty of clearance for vehicles.

Now they know her name


VOL. 167, NO. 6
JUNE 1985
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
GREAT SALT LAKE: THE FLOODING DESERT 694
U.S.-MEXICAN BORDER: LIFE ON THE LINE 720
JAVA'S WILDLIFE RETURNS 750
Along Afghanistan's War-torn Frontier 772
FAIR SKIES FOR THE CAYMAN ISLANDS 798

the girl with the green eyes
the one on the cover of *National Geographic*
now seventeen years later
the color of the iris the same
the penetrating gaze
now with a hood of maturity
still intense
after years under this burka
skin weathered by the complexion
of climate and exposure to the charade of war

stillness in her bearing
on hold
in the mountains of Tora Bora

I print her name on my mind
Sharbat
a Pashtun
"only at peace when at war"
they say

I try to define war
that need for revenge
retaliation
justice
like we pursue the terrorists
under a different guise
wearing the burka of western civilization

both trapped by ideologies
a backward dance to set things right
without the music of grace

Linda Siebenga

My four-legged friend

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

It's what I don't see when I look out the window that catches my eye today. For nearly 12 years our family dog, Dusty, was a part of the landscape here on the farm. Every homecoming was greeted by a wagging tail; its owner waiting for a pat on the head and the affirmation that he was indeed "a good boy."

As a kid I grew up watching *Lassie* on TV and always thought it would be neat to have my very own sable-colored collie. And a handsome dog he was, our Dusty. A genius he was not. I'm certain that his IQ score measured less than the circumference of his pointy nose. However, he was loyal, gentle and just smart enough to be a whole lot of fun.

Like a fuzzy alien

He arrived here at the age of six months, a fluffy, energetic fellow with cars still stained from his registration tattoo. The green ink gave him a comical appearance, kind of like a fuzzy alien. He loved the kids and was their constant companion outdoors. When they played down by the creek he would come home smelling fishy. When they built a snow fort, he would help out by jumping on top and caving the roof in. When we played baseball, you had to be quick to get the ball before he did. Now and then he stopped a flying ball with his body. (Told you he wasn't too smart.)

If the kids weren't around, he was usually in the company of several cats. Big as he was, Dusty was known to run away from a particular cat if she happened to be in a bad mood. Otherwise, he often allowed them to snuggle up beside him, or even sleep on top of him. These days we only have one cat left, and he's driving us all crazy because he misses the dog.

Dusty was the only one around here who loved spring stone-picking time. When we were all weary from bending and walking, he was still waiting for someone to throw a clump of dirt for him to chase. Or maybe he'd amuse himself by sticking his snout down a groundhog hole and barking. Given his notoriously bad breath, I often wondered if the occupant of the burrow would die laughing or just pass out from the smell of Dusty's halitosis.

The past couple of years, Dusty began showing his age. Arthritis became a problem. For awhile we carried him up and down the stairs, but it isn't easy hauling around an embarrassed 60-lb. dog. Finally we had to move his bedding from the basement out to the garage.

His most enthusiastic bark

In spite of the stiffness, Dusty still had some energy. Nothing lit him up quite like the sound of a Mennonite horse and buggy passing by. He reserved his most enthusiastic bark for those occasions and when he was sure he had an audience, he'd break into a howl. Even that didn't work so well lately. Sometimes he'd just stand there with his nose in the air straining out a pathetic little squeal instead of his once impressive howl.

Having survived the winter, he would be all right, I was sure, for the summer months. I was wrong. Last Wednesday evening he pranced ahead of me around the farm as usual. Thursday he suddenly took ill. The vet prescribed some antibiotics, but by Friday be wasn't even strong enough to greet me when I came home. On Saturday we took him back to the vet, who tried one last treatment to no avail. By Monday noon, Dusty was dead. Lung cancer, apparently.

Heaviness in my heart

In my head I know he was an old dog who had a long, happy life. And there are so many people dealing with much greater tragedies. Yet I was surprised by the heaviness in my heart as I watched his brief struggle and then had to accept his death. Through my tears I thought about the inescapable reality of pain in this world. This short but agonizing glimpse of suffering reminded me once again of the ugly stain sin has left on a once perfect creation.

We'll get another dog, for sure. Talk at the dinner table is what breed to get next. Just the discussion on what we should name our next dog will provide material for an entire column in the future. Meanwhile, I have some good memories of a fine friend. And I'll always have a soft spot for Lassie dogs.

Heidi VanDerSlikke lives in Harriston, Ont.

News

Ethiopian churches attacked

ETHIOPIA (Compass) — A Muslim mob attacked an indigenous Protestant church in the eastern Ethiopian town of Asaita in early March.

The attackers reportedly shouted slogans against the United States and other Western countries. Police arrived in time to save the Mekane Yesus church from being burned, but much of the property inside the building was destroyed, including Bibles, hymnbooks and choir robes. The Muslim protesters — many of whom were students — attacked two Christian evangelists: Molla Tesfay, who is still receiving treatment in Addis Ababa for his injuries, and Gureta Ahmad.

Police detained Ahmad, which officials said was for his own safety. But he is still in jail, casting doubt on the true reason for his detention. Muslims leaders accused Ahmad of proselytizing.

Estimates suggest that the number of Protestants and evangelicals in Ethiopia has grown from 3.5 million in 1985 to 10 million in 2001. Most of the Protestant churches have active outreach programs, which can have an abrasive impact upon the Muslims.

PICTURE THIS! You can advertise in *Christian Courier*'s Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25 + GST. Call: 1-800-969-4838 for details.

Opinion/News Analysis

Mixing with the world

Tony Campolo

Do Christians compromise the uniqueness of the Gospel when they get together with non-Christians to explore the possibility of spiritual commonalities? To what extent should we participate with Agnostics, New Agers, and those from other religions in the on-going dialogue concerning values, polity, and social policy for the American society?

Mixing with New Age gurus

I have been forced to reflect on such questions in response to condemnation that some people laid on me following my participation in an academic forum held in Washington, D.C. called *The Politics of Meaning*. This forum included such well-known theo- logians and social philosophers as Harvard's Cornell West and Harvey Cox. There were also other speakers at the conference who have been labeled by some Christian leaders as New Age gurus.

My critics contend that evangelicals ought not to participate in such gatherings, because the Scripture says, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness and what accord hath Christ with Baal? Or what path hath he that believeth with an infantile?... Come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord." (See 2 Corinthians 6:14-17).

They argue that by participating in this forum I relativize the Gospel and may have even given legitimation to pagan philosophies. They may have a good point.

Meeting philosophers on their own turf

On the other hand, the Apostle Paul was willing to participate in exchanges of ideas and beliefs with the pagan philosophers of his day. That is certainly what he was doing on Mars Hill as he laid out the Gospel in the most sophisticated, intellectual arena of his day (Acts 17:17-34).

My own answer to the question is that we should "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15). In this pluralistic society, we should always be ready like Paul to engage competing philosophers on their own turf.

Biblically prescribed guidelines

In this commitment, I believe that there are some biblically prescribed guidelines that must be followed. First, we should never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16). The gospel has stood the challenges of culture despisers of 2000 years. I believe that if we are carefully prepared to dialogue, and if we lean heavily on the Holy Spirit, very quickly the truth will come out strongly.

Secondly, we should try to make sure that in efforts to speak relevantly to those who might scorn the gospel, we do not water down the biblical message. We cannot distort the truth in an attempt to make it easier. We must be true to the Bible and to the essence of its message.

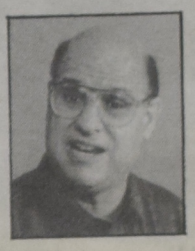
Following Paul's example

That is why I always make it a rule to speak about the death and resurrection of Christ and how it relates to the issues under discussion. This is what Paul did in his Mars Hill oration. He was uncompromising in spite of the fact that his strong stand cost him credibility in the eyes of the Greek intelligencia.

Third, we should make it a point not to put down what others believe as we affirm our own commitments. Our obligation is to bear witness to Christ and to leave it to the Holy Spirit to bring people under conviction about errors they might hold. Putting down others who disagree with our gospel does not win followers to Christ. We must speak the truth in love.

I believe we dishonor Christ if we do otherwise. I believe that if we fail to engage in respectful dialogue with non-Christians, we will only end up "preaching to the choir." Actually, I prefer secular audiences when I speak. I consider it a privilege to lay out my convictions to any who will give me serious consideration. I do not worry, either. As Jesus says of such times, "Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." (See Matthew 10:19-20).

I hope all of this seems right. As every Christian must, I am trying to "work out my salvation" in secular settings. I do so with "fear and trembling" that I might be faithful to the full truth of the gospel. May God bless us all with wisdom.



Tony Campolo teaches at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. His website is: www.tony-campolo.com

Newsbytes: From Christian race horses to frozen human beings

... continued from page 7

Uribe, a lawyer and a former governor and senator, was expected to receive nearly 50 percent of the vote in the May19 election, 20 percentage points more than his nearest rival, perhaps enough to avoid a June 16 run-off.

According to the *New York Times*, he has promised to become "the first soldier of Colombia" in a campaign against leftist rebels. He promises to double the size of the army and the police and to organize one million villagers to serve as informants, some of them armed.

"We are going to work hard to strengthen the capacity of the state to protect the citizenry and control the violent ones," Mr. Uribe said. "This is a country that has suffered very much from violence and kidnaping and we are going to put a stop to this problem."

Apparently any pledge by a Latin American politician to use military force to crush rebellion and banditry earns him the epithet of ultraconservative or right wing. The more that epithet sticks, the more likely left liberals in the west are to label the rebels as freedom fighters.

According to the *Times*, Mr. Uribe worries human rights groups. They believe that his policies may come at a steep price for Colombia's fragile democracy, because during his governorship of the province of Antioquia illegal right-wing paramilitary groups thrived, working with military units in a brutal campaign against guerrillas. The guerrillas, feeling threatened by Uribe's campaign, set off a bomb on April 14 meant for Mr. Uribe's motorcade; it killed four bystanders but left him unharmed. His father was killed by the guerrillas in 1983.

A startling swing to the right

"Dutch politics took a startling swing to the right in parliamentary elections," begins an article in the *New York Times* describing the success of Pim Fortuyn's party after his murder. Mr. Fortuyn's party has not yet named a new leader, but it is expected to get 26 of the 150 seats. The Christian Democrats were the biggest winner with an estimated 40 seats. The Labor Party was the biggest loser, dropping from 45 to 24 seats, its worst results in many years.

The Christian Democrats, however, are hardly a right-wing party. In Canada they would be seen as left-leaning. And, as Charles Colson, pointed out in a recent column, Fortuyn, too, would hardly qualify as a right-winger in Canada or the U.S. He favored gay rights, the legalization of drugs and euthanasia. However, because he was labeled as anti-immigration, a violation of political correctness, he is lumped with the French extremist Le Pen and called a Neo-fascist. He criticized Dutch immigration policies because he feared that the huge influx of Muslims into the country was a threat to its culture and its western democratic values. His defense of western versus Islamic culture earned him the right wing label, even though his political views are left liberal. The liberal press seems to use the epithet "right wing" to describe anyone who violates their standards of political correctness.

Reproduction bill draws criticism

The Assisted Human Reproduction Bill introduced in the House of Commons May 9 banning cloning has raised strong objections from Christian critics, some of whom warn that it sets us on the same route as the Nazis because it still allows for experimentation with human life.

The bill bans human cloning, outlaws the sale of human eggs and sperm, criminalizes for-profit surrogate mothering and will strictly regulate fertility clinics. The bill comes after 10 years of debate. In the meantime, the rights of the "products" of techniques like in vitro fertilization, which gives life to 1,400 babies per year were left in limbo. One in eight Canadian couples are infertile and, with people having children at an older age, those stats are expected to go up in the near future.

The harvesting of embryonic stem cells for medical research will be limited to "surplus" embryos created during in vitro fertilization by donors who give written consent — and to researchers who can prove the cells, whose extraction destroys the embryo, are "necessary" to their work.

The bill also creates the Assisted Human Reproduction Agency of Canada to license fertility clinics, approve scientific research involving human embryos, regulate new technologies and maintain a national registry of donors and recipients of sperm and eggs.

Dr. Alan Bernstein, president of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, said, "It's going to now allow all kinds of important research to go forward," citing Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, diabetes, and cancer as research areas that could benefit.

But some committee members said the proposed law would open the door to the use of human embryos. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, too, objected that the bill fails to protect all of human life because it allows research with so-called spare embryos. It recommends "adopting these orphaned embryos" instead of "sacrificing human embryos for scientific research".

Frozen cells ignored before

Strange that these frozen cells were largely ignored by Christians until the need came up to fashion an iron-clad argument against abortion and experimentation with them. A few years ago we saw them as no more than surplus side products of fertility clinics; now we suddenly want to call them full-fledged frozen human beings.

As Anne McLellan, the Health Minister, emphasized, surplus embryos are routinely destroyed.

"Do you know what happens to them?" she asked rhetorically, according to the *National Post*. "They go in the garbage. So, the donor can choose to have them thrown out, which is quite clearly their right. Or they can also chose to let those surplus embryos be used for the purposes of medical research."

Such thinking hardly sets us on the road to Nazi eugenics. Politics pushes us to make distinctions in black and white terms just so we can label someone else as the evil opposition. Legislators in both the U.S. and Canada and most other countries have dealt quite responsibly with the cloning issue.

Meditations

God's judgment is the deliverance of his beloved

MARBURY-ART REFERENCE BUREAU

The Church of Saint Sophia in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) — one of the majestic medieval cathedrals of the Christian East the Pope refers to.

Pope John Paul II

VATICAN CITY (Zenit.org) – Today we hear an example taken from the third and last chapter of the Book of Habakkuk. This prophet lived toward the end of the 7th century B.C., when the kingdom of Judah felt itself crushed between two expanding superpowers, Egypt on one side and Babylon on the other.

Many scholars maintain that this final hymn is a quotation. An authentic liturgical song was added as an appendix to Habakkuk's brief writing, "in a tone of lamentation" to be accompanied by "string instruments," as two notes explain at the beginning and end of the Canticle (see Habakkuk 3:1-19b). Taking up the theme of the ancient prayer of Israel, the Liturgy of Lauds invites us to transform this composition into a Christian song by selecting some significant verses:

Lord, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord.
Renew them in our day,
in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy.
God came from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.
His glory covered the heavens
and his praise filled the earth.
His splendor was like the sunrise;
rays flashed from his hand,
where his power was hidden.
You came out to deliver your people,
to save your anointed one.
You trampled the sea with your horses,
churning the great waters.
I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity
to come on the nation invading us.
Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.
The Sovereign Lord is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
he enables me to go on the heights.
(verses 3:2-4, 13a, 15-19a)

Majestic image of God

The hymn, which displays considerable poetical force, presents a majestic image of the Lord. His solemn figure dominates the entire scene of the world and the universe trembles at his majestic advance. He is coming from the south, from Teman and Mount Paran, namely, from the Sinai area, scene of the great epiphany of revelation for Israel. Psalm 67 also described "the Lord who came from Sinai into the holy place" of Jerusalem (verse 18). His appearance, in keeping with a constant biblical tradition, is surrounded by light.

It is a radiation of his transcendent mystery that is communicated to humanity: indeed, the light is outside of us, we cannot hold it or stop it; yet, it envelops, enlightens, and warms us. God is like this — both distant and close, beyond us and yet next to us, in fact, willing to be with us and in us. The earth responds with a chorus of praise to the revelation of his majesty: it is a cosmic response, a kind of prayer to which man gives voice.

Ardent artistic creations

Christian tradition has lived this interior experience not only in inner personal spirituality, but also in ardent artistic creations. Beyond the majestic medieval cathedrals, we mention above all the art of the Christian East with its wonderful icons and the ingenious architecture of its churches and monasteries.

The church of St. Sophia of Constantinople remains in this respect a sort of archetype in its delimitation of the space of Christian prayer: the presence and incomprehensibleness of the light allow one to behold both the intimacy and transcendence of the divine reality. It penetrates the whole praying community to the very marrow of their bones and at the same time invites it to surpass itself and be totally immersed in the ineffability of the mystery.

Just as significant are the artistic and spiritual invitations that characterize the monasteries of that Christian tradition. In those authentic sacred spaces — and our thoughts go immediately to Mount Athos — time contains in itself a sign of eternity. The mystery of God manifests itself and hides itself in those spaces through the continuous prayer of the monks and the hermits regarded always as akin to the angels.

But let's return to the Canticle of the prophet Habakkuk. For the sacred author, the Lord's entry into the world has a precise meaning. He wills to enter into human history, "in the midst of the years," (repeated twice in verse 2) to judge and better its affairs, which we conduct in such a confused and at times perverse ways.

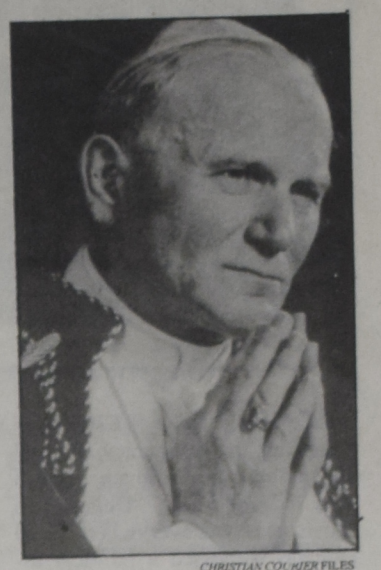
Then God shows his indignation (verse 3:2c) against evil. And the song makes reference to a series of inexorable divine interventions, without specifying if it is through direct or indirect actions. Israel's exodus is evoked, when the Pharaoh's cavalry was drowned in the sea (verse 3:15). But it also points to the work that the Lord is about to accomplish in his confrontations with the new oppressor of his people. The divine intervention is described in an almost visible way through a series of agricultural images: "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls.... " (verse 17). All signs of peace and fruitfulness are eliminated and the world appears as a desert. This is a cherished symbol of other prophets (see Jeremiah 4:19-26; 12:7-13; 14:1-10), to illustrate the Lord's judgment, who is not indifferent before evil, oppression, and injustice.

In face of the divine intervention, the man of prayer remains terrified (Hab 3:16), he shakes and feels his soul emptied and stricken by a tremor, because the God of justice is infallible, very different from earthly judges.

However, the Lord's entry has yet another function, which our song exalts with joy. Indeed, in his indignation he does not forget his compassionate mercy (verse 3:2). He goes forth from the horizon of his glory not only to destroy the arrogance of the wicked, but also to save his people and his anointed (verse 3:13), namely Israel and its king. He also wills to be the liberator of the oppressed, to make hope arise in the hearts of victims, to open a new era of justice.

Transformed into a hymn of joy

Because of this, although marked by a "tone of lament" our canticle is transformed into a hymn of joy. In fact, the anticipated calamities look toward the deliverance from oppressors (verse 3:15). Therefore, they spark joy in the righteous who exclaims: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." (verse 18) The same attitude is suggested by Jesus to his disciples at the time of the apocalyptic cataclysms: "Now when these things begin to take place, look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." (Lk 21:28)



CHRISTIAN COURIER FILES

Pope John Paul II

Regained serenity

The final verse in Habakkuk's canticle, which expresses regained serenity, is very beautiful. The Lord is defined — as David did in Psalm 18 — not only as "the force" of his faithful, but also as him who gives them agility, freshness, and serenity in dangers. David sang: "I love you, O Lord, my strength.... He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; and he enables me to stand on the heights." (Psalm 18:1, 33) Now our singer exclaims: "The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. " (Hab 3:19) When one has the Lord beside him, one no longer fears nightmares and obstacles, but goes forward with a light step and joy on the ever harsh way of life.

[Translation by Zenit.org, which periodically sends us the meditations of Pope John Paul II. I could not resist this one. – The editor]

Christian Courier,
Canada's only biweekly Reformed newspaper, offers:
- A Reformed perspective on events and culture,
- A point of contact with the church worldwide,
- A catalyst to set you thinking.

Subscribe now, and get our special introductory rate, for first-time subscribers: ***$25 per year, for 26 issues.***
Call ***Christian Courier*** for more details at:
1-800-969-4838.

News Comment

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

SOMETHING WEIRD IS happening to democracy. I think the spelling should be amended to read demo-crazy. Democrazia shows its cracks everywhere. Staid Holland witnessed a political assassination of a far-right politician. Killing a person for his convictions has not happened there since 1584, when William the Silent, Prince of Orange, was shot by a Spanish sympathizer.

The murdered Pim Fortuyn (his name means Fortune) was a charismatic homosexual. Many saw him as a sort of Messiah. He emerged out of nowhere, and, in a matter of months, became immensely popular. In a country, where politics is marked by blandness, Fortuyn stood out with his lifestyle and became famous for challenging the nation's multiculturalism and traditional political consensus. He told drug addicts to "go ahead and overdose", advised immigrants that "the Netherlands is full" and said that asylum seekers should be given no more than "a tent and some food." He broke all political taboos and didn't give a rip about political correctness. His disdain for environmental causes proved fatal: a determined animal rights activist fired six shots into his face.

THE ENTIRE EUROPEAN continent rides a rapid rise of the right: Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Haider in Austria. Denmark, Norway, Italy, Portugal: all these countries now have far-right parties in their governments. Everywhere in the western world the Reagan-Thatcher model is seen as the agenda to pursue, promoted by the power elite. The rise of the "right" can be blamed on the creation of the European Union which was forced through against public sentiment. Talk about democracy, rule of the people. Also the Euro, the same currency throughout, is causing a lot of popular resentment.

LE PEN'S PLATFORM promised to take France out of this political set-up and close the borders to all non-white people. A fifth of the people supported him. The same percentage applies almost everywhere in our prosperous world, because the common man feels alienated, sees government as unaccountable and, in Europe, regards the Strasbourg-based European Parliament as just one more layer of bureaucracy, stifling the vox populi, the voice of the people, a complaint also heard here.

Within Europe, the Netherlands is a country as secular as the rest of the continent. Just as Quebec overnight turned from the most Roman Catholic conservative province, to being almost totally a-religious, so too the Dutch changed from being highly devout to near complete unbelief. In that godless vacuum many lost their anchor, and Pim Fortuyn — apparently a practicing Roman Catholic — provided them with a vision. In his last interview he openly admitted that: "I am instrumental in a process to interpret a grander perspective. But I am just passing through, God has a plan with the world and a plan with me."

LIKE ANY DEMAGOGUE, he had instant solutions for healthcare, for education, for security. In his native Rotterdam, the second-largest city in the Netherlands, he won the local elections two months ago, and even after his death his party won 20 per cent of the national vote. No doubt, he was popular. Fortuyn's views were a curious mix of right, centre and left: against more immigrants, but in favor of women's rights and a strong supporter of Israel. He managed to express all his views in a clear and convincing manner.

According to Folkert Jensma, editor-in-chief of the *NRC Handelsblad*, based in Rotterdam, "Mr. Fortuyn has a gift for American-style sound-bites politics and combined charisma with personal charm: if his views were contradictory, as they quite often were, he simply evaded the critics by instantly moderating or clarifying his statements. He had a talent for rhetoric and looked great on television."

Well, his party came in second, with 23 seats. The CDA, the Christian Democrats, came in first with 43 seats out of the 150, and will form the next government. The CDA had been in opposition for eight years, after being part of the ruling elite ever since Abraham Kuyper appeared on the political scene. The CDA are the united forum of the former KVP, the Catholic Folk Party, the AR, the Anti-Revolutionary, the CHP, the Christian Historical Party.

IN THE NETHERLANDS, there is proportional representation, which means that there never is a clear majority. The big losers were the PvdA (the Labor Party) and the VVD (the Liberal Party), which were part of the former government. Due to the presence in the Dutch government of the Liberals — which are more like the Conservatives in Canada or the Republican Party in the U.S.A. — this coalition was called pink.

The CDA people have a problem: going alone with the List of Pim Fortuyn, does not give them a clear majority. They need the VVD, the other 'right' movement, to attain a majority: the three together would have 93 seats. But the Liberals balk: overly much criticized by the CDA when they were in opposition, and having lost a significant number of seats, they argue that they have lost the confidence of the people. So there is a lot of negotiation going on. Sometimes it takes months before all the different angles are worked out and a functioning government is formed.

I SAW THE NEW LEADER of Pim Fortuyn's party on TV, and guess what he wanted: "Better healthcare." Which reminded me of Ernie Eves, the new Premier of Ontario. His voice is so gravelly that, whenever I hear him, I visualize pebbles tumbling out of his mouth and soiling his immaculate shirt, lovingly laundered, I am sure, by his glamorous, million-dollar paramour.

I forced myself to listen to his throne speech, and in the process discovered why politicians get paid so much for the 90 days out of 365 they sit in the Park called Queen's: the boredom of it all requires quadruple pay.

I really perked my ears when healthcare was mentioned and cancer was singled out. The Ontario government promised extra funding there, mentioning that now 50 per cent of adults and 75 per cent of children survive cancer and that: "Your government will work to eradicate this disease."

Promises are the stock in trade of politicians all over the world. The "War Against Cancer" started that way in 1971 with the U.S. National Cancer Act. Since then, billions have been spent on research under the banner of "Cancer can be beaten."

Well, I am a cynic for good reason. Here is the sick reality: in spite of mountains of money the incidence of childhood cancer has increased by 26 per cent. Some particular cancers have escalated even more dramatically: acute lymphocytic leukemia, 62 per cent; brain cancer, 50 per cent, and bone cancer, 40 per cent. The up-beat throne speech in Ontario did not mention these alarming statistics. If only words could cure....

In the U.S.A. — and I presume in Canada as well — the annual budget of the National Cancer Institute has, since 1971, grown 20-fold, from $220 million to $4.2 billion. It is typical of our capitalistic society to assume that cash is the cure-all. Dollars mean research, drugs, expensive diagnostic technology. The harsh facts are that the more we spend to combat this dreaded disease, the greater the number of people suffering from it. It could well be argued that money causes cancer.

TWO U.S. DOCTORS, Samuel Epstein, chairman of the Cancer Prevention Coalition, and Quentin Young, chairman of the Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, claim that, based on more than 20 U.S. and international studies, exposures by father or mother to a wide range of occupational carcinogens are major causes of childhood cancers, particularly as fetuses, infants and children are much more vulnerable and sensitive to toxic and carcinogenic exposures.

They also found that brain cancer and leukemia in children can result from frequent consumption of nitrite-dyed hot dogs. We want our food stuff to look nice and fresh, but nitrites added to meat for coloring purposes, have shown to react with natural chemicals in meat to form a potent carcinogen.

Then there are our fruits and vegetables, often contaminated with high concentrations of pesticides, which pose major risks of childhood cancer in adult life. Also Ritalin has been shown to induce highly aggressive rare liver cancers in rodents at doses comparable to those prescribed in children.

No word about these simple steps in the Throne speech, nor has the Cancer Establishment ever warned of these avoidable risks. Instead, their mindsets are fixated on damage control in the form of screening, diagnosis and treatment.

THE NEWEST FAD IS genetic research, where the drug makers see immense profits. Writes Epstein: "For decades the war on cancer has been dominated by powerful groups of interlocking professional and financial interests, with the highly profitable drug development system at its hub."

Breast cancer is a case in point. Take mammography. After 30 years of major investments in screening trials, involving hundreds of thousands of women in several countries comparing expensive mammograms with simple physical exams only, the mortality rate was practically identical. The vested interest of pharmaceutical companies in procuring expensive cancer drugs, has led to the charge by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, the U.S.'s leading charity watchdog, that "The American Cancer Society is more interested in accumulating wealth than saving lives."

Frankly cancer will be conquered only when we detoxify society: insist on clean car engines, renewable — wind, solar — energy, organic food, tobacco-free societies. For now cancer is big business. The typical cancer patient contributes upward of $100,000 to the Gross Domestic Product: more people work in the field than die from it.

The word 'drug' is derived from the Dutch word 'droog' which means to dry since people have historically dried plants to make medicinal preparations. Even today, plants are the cornerstone of most drugs. I sense that, if it ever were discovered that dandelions contained the cure for cancer, I suspect this would never make it to the market. It seems to me that the drug industry is not interested in healing, only in making money.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont, where he tends a large, organic, vegetable garden.

FOOD SAFETY

BBQ tip for cooking ground beef burgers

(NC)—Health Canada suggests you make the burger patties thin to ensure the meat cooks all the way through. Use a quick-read food thermometer to check when the middle of the burger reaches 71°C (160°F). Insert the food thermometer through the side of the thickest burger, into the middle of the patty. Your burger's done at 71!

- News Canada

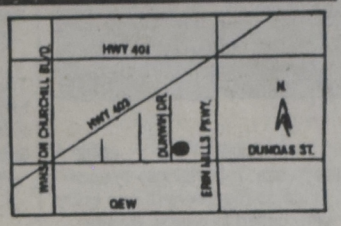
TIME FOR NEW FURNITURE?

Come and see our beautiful showroom with the European flair!

SCHRÖDER FURNITURE

... for that special item!

Our "coil" spring furniture has all the support and comfort you need.



Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

LITTLE EUROPE RESORT and TRAILER PARK

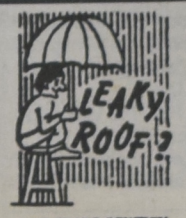
Bracebridge, Muskoka

Plan a successful vacation at our resort known for its Dutch hospitality. Reasonable rates for cottage rentals. Excellent for camping, swimming and fishing (ideal for group camping). "Little Europe" is located 10 km. east of Hwy. 11, on Hwy. 118 East, past the Muskoka Airport.

• No pets please • Showers available
Roel & Riet Bakema
Little Europe Resort, R.R. 3, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1X1
Phone: (705) 645-2738

PICTURE THIS!
You can advertise in our Business and Service Directory once a month for only:
$25.00 + GST

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.



DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING (1992) LTD.

Free Estimates
R.R. #1, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Marty: (905) 563-7374
Chuck: (905) 646-0199
Fax: (905) 563-0301

BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY

TEL: (905) 688-8139
FAX: (905) 685-7651
meshuis@iaw.on.ca

#201-60 JAMES ST.
ST. CATHARINES, ON
L2R 7E7

MARK D. ESHUIS, B.A., LL.B
BARRISTER - SOLICITOR - NOTARY PUBLIC

CRIMINAL LAW
WILLS AND ESTATES
• REAL ESTATE
• CIVIL LAW

Richard Haalboom
Q.C., B.A., LL.B.
BARRISTER SOLICITOR NOTARY

7 Duke West, Suite 302
Kitchener, ON N2H 6N7
phone: 519-579-2920
fax: 519-576-0471

578 Upper James St.
Hamilton, ON
L9C 2Y6

Digital Art & Graphics

For all your printing needs
1 colour to full colour process
flyers, books, catalogues, magazines, etc.
call **Brian Bezemer** at
Toll-free: 1-800-247-0155 or: 905-574-0822
Fax: 905-574-0677

AGRI-BUSINESS
MEESTER INSURANCE BROKERS LTD.
SPECIALIST
SMITHVILLE
1-800-465-8256 905-957-2333
www.meesterinsurance.com

Serving the Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge area in real estate.

BENJAMINS Realty Inc.

Jake and Judy Benjamins
Broker/Sales Rep
Office: 519-575-9092
Web page:
www.jakebenjamins.com

BAKKER ATAMANUK
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

150 James St., P.O. Box 1328
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7J8

Albert J. Bakker
905-688-1520

Reformed Faith Witness needs your support.

Your gift of $10 or more to **Reformed Faith Witness** is tax receiptable and will be greatly appreciated by the staff of **Christian Courier** and the board of RFW. Please make your cheque payable to Reformed Faith Witness

Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service

4184 Mountain Street, P.O. Box 844
Beamsville, Ont. L0R 1B0
phone 905-563-4471 fax 4696
email: winter@vaxxine.com

Emma Winter

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME

287 Station St., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Serving Families For 4 Generations
Directors: Gove C. Merritt and Thomas C. Merritt

(905) 957-7031

Jerry's Auto Body (Beamsville) Inc.

Serving Beamsville and area since 1969
Complete Collision Repairs • Quality Refinishing

Jerry Gerritsen
Alan Gerritsen

5529 Regional Rd. #81
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: (905) 563-7702

Jennie Berg

Paris Gospel Text Gifts and Crafts

Cassettes, Bibles, Videos and Gifts for Every Occasion

267 Grand River St. N., Paris, ON N3L 2N9
phone: 519-442-3136

Electric Power Tool Service Saw Blade Sharpening
Supplier of Quality Woodworking Machines

ART'S TOOL SALES & SERVICE Ltd.
10 Nihan Dr.
St. Catharines, ON
L2N 1L1
(905) 646-0728
Aart Van Krimpen

"We service what we sell"

MAGNAVOX-HITACHI-ZENITH SALES & SERVICE
TELEVISION-RADIO-STEREO
ANTENNA INSTALLATION & REPAIRS

GARY VAN DYK
Serving the Niagara area for 30 years.

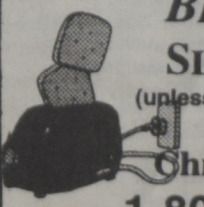
GRANTHAM TV CENTRE LTD.

391 Vine St., St. Catharines, Ont.
Phone: (905) 934-9952 or (905) 934-9964

Glendale Motors
407 Wilson St., Ancaster
Just west of Mohawk on Hwy. #2
We supply propane
Rob Brouwer
Doug Kloet

Shell

(905) 648-4113 **Adrian Kloet (owner)**



BETTER THAN SLICED BREAD
(unless you're making toast)
a subscription to
Christian Courier
1-800-969-4838

Classifieds

Classifieds

As of May 1999:
Note: 7% GST will be added to all prices listed below.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Christian Courier is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, thirteen days prior to publication date.

RATES

All personal and family announcements: $16.00 per column inch (P.I.) + GST (columns are two inches wide). Display advertising re.: businesses and organizations: minimum $18.20 P.I. + GST, depending on design and frequency.

PHOTOS

There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original (which we will return) or a downloadable Internet image.

PERSONAL ADS

Christian Courier would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $16 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a $25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in *Christian Courier* and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD

mail: *Christian Courier*
#4 - 261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
fax: 905-682-8313
email: ccadpromo@aol.com

OTHER INFORMATION

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format. And editing style.

b) Please provide us with clear copy. *Christian Courier* is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.

Thank You

Thank-You!

Praise and thankfulness to God for the many blessings bestowed upon us in these 50 years; for our family and many friends who remembered us on our "Open House" with their prayers, presence, gifts, cards, phone calls and loving wishes. We will always treasure this day in our hearts. Thank-you to all.

In Christian love,
Herman and Anna Pieters

Hamming

The family of **Antje Hamming** wishes to thank all those who have shown their sympathy with cards, flowers, and kind words at her recent passing away. Special thanks to Rev. Van Weelden and the wonderful staff at Shalom Manor who were so caring of Mom to the very end.

Call *Christian Courier* today to place your family ad: 1-800-969-4838.

Anniversaries

As parents of
SYD and EVELYN HIELEMA
we rejoice in their 25th wedding anniversary on Tuesday, June 25, 2002. We thank God for them. They are a constant blessing to their 3 children, to us and to all their friends.
Bert and Diny Hielema
Jacob and Maria Kuntz
Their address: 487 - 5th Ave S.E., Sioux Center, Iowa 51250, USA

1957 June 4 2002
We are happy to announce the 45th anniversary of our parents
JOHN and ALIDA ZANTINGH
(nee Visscher)
We pray that God may continue to bless your marriage, and that your loving example to all of us continues to shine. Thank you. Love from
Jane & Pete Vos of Carlisle, ON
Dylan, Casey, Dennis, Jonathan
Micheal & Tracy Zantingh of Cayuga, ON - Matthew, Kaylee
Paul & Wendy Zantingh of Bowmanville, ON
Taylor, Bethany & Christopher
Lisa & Ed Bandstra of Lethbridge, AB
Kimberly, Amber
Peter & Ashley Zantingh of Schomberg, ON
Home address: 105 -180 Limeridge Rd W., Hamilton ON L9C 7H7
"Look to the Lord and his strength Seek his face always" Psalm 105:4

1942 June 6 2002
Oentsjerk Bowmanville
Fryslan Ontario
"Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare." Psalm 40:5
With thanksgiving and praise to God, we announce the 60th Wedding Anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents
JELLE and JESSICA REKKER
We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you both with health and happiness. With love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:
Richard & Lucy Rekker of Bowmanville
Doug & Renita VanderKooi - Allison, Meagan, Keenan
Jeff Rekker - Joshua, Samantha Tara
John & Pat Rekker of Bowmanville ON
Jason Rekker & Jennifer Wiebe (engaged)
David & Kristin Rekker
Nathan, Jennifer, Amanda
Joe & Diane Rekker of Cobourg, ON
Scott & Shauna Rekker
Hayley, Clare
Ward & Lisa Rombough - Jacob
Dirk & Sylvia Bouma of Kingston, ON
David & Anita Bouma - Jonathan
Chris & Juanita Grypma
Matt & Leisha Asma
Andrea Bouma & Mike Putnam (friend)
Harry & Nellie Rekker of Millbrook ON
Leona, Daniel
Frank & Julia Hoftyzer of Hastings ON
Bruce & Mchelle Rozema - Matthew, Nicole, Brianna, Kiersten
Ryan & Arlene Bell
Daniel, Pamela
Home Address: RR #6, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K7 (Phone 905-623-7386)

1952 May 21 2002
"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful." Col.3:15
With praise and thanksgiving to God, we celebrated the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents
JOHN and KITTY VERSLUIS
May God continue to bless you.
With love from all of us:
John & Trudy - Andrew, Cody, Jenny
Leo & Fran - Alex
Nellie - Shaunna
Chris & Jan
Caroline & Derek - Bryce, Brianna,
Christel & Mario - Aleshia, Madison
Bill & Peggy
Margaret & Tom - Amelia, Mike, Brennan
Ed - Lydia, Nick
Home Address: 28 John St, St. Catharines, ON L2N 4P1

1952 June 1 2002
WOW! 40 years. Congratulations Mom and Dad! We would like to announce the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our parents,
JERRY and WINNIE HOYTEMA
(nee Postma)
The Lord has blessed us with wonderful and loving parents. We thank Him for their love for each other and the love they have shown us as kids. What a wonderful example of God's rich blessings and love.
George & Iris Hoytema - Kevin, Michelle, Brandyn
Judy & Bill VanderLingen - Brittany, Stephanie, Ashley, Zachary
Bert Hoytema
Michelle & Joel Ezinga - Katie, Rachil, Ally, Jenny, Jordan
Home Address: 26-375 Book Road Grimsby, Ontario L3M 2M8

1952 June 13 2002
HARRY and JANET ANTONIDES
(nee Veenendaal)
With thankfulness to God, we are pleased to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents.
Ann & Paul Weiringa of Cowichan Bay, BC - Sarah, Jeanette
Dean & Leana Antonides of Richmond Hill, ON - Vasia
Dale & Jessica Antonides of Barrie, ON
Home address: 40 Finchurst Dr. Willowdale, ON M2R 1L1

We give praise and thanks to God for you both on the occasion of your 40th wedding anniversary:
BOB and ANN BRINKERT
(nee Straatsma)
June 2nd, 2002.
We love you! Your children and grandchildren:
Wilfred & Ingrid Schilstra - Steven, Philip, Emma, Leanne
Robert & Rose Brinkert - Sarah, Stephanie, Robyn, Colin
Alan & Caroine Bos - Carina
Allen & Elaine DeKroon
Great is Thy Faithfulness!
Home Address:
RR#1, Lyn, ON K0E 1M0

Rotterdam June 17 Hamilton
1942 2002
"Great is thy Faithfulness"
Thanks to God for His continued faithfulness to our parents and grandparents so that they can celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary.
PIETER J. and ADRIANA IPEMA
(nee Schippers)
"Thanks for the Memories."
From the Children;
Wilma Sweers of Brantford ON
Regina & Bill Wagter of Dunnville ON
Margaret & Bill Gerryts of Wellandport, ON
Bob Ipema of Laguna Niguel CA USA
Peter & Isabella Ipema of Dundas ON
Frans & Wilma Ipema of Beamsville ON
Art & Saskia Ipema of Vancouver, BC
21 grandchildren and 25 great-children.
"Open House" at Wellingstone Christian Homes on Monday, June 17,2002, from 2-4 p.m.
Home Address: Apt.124, 1415 Upper Wellington St., Hamilton ON L9A 5E8

1942 June 11 2002
"Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God." Philip. 4:6
Together we hope to celebrate the 60th anniversary of
FRED and CORRIE WELFING
What a wonderful testimony of our God's faithfulness and love.
Dianne & Bert Fluit-Ayr
Jackie & Daryl, Mike and AnneMarie, Darrell & Debbie
John & Hilda Welfing-Clyde
Karen & Chad, Steven
Alice & Hank Bosch-Branchton
Brad, Lincoln & Mary-Elizabeth, Arron & Laura, Tirzah & Mark
Open House will be held at Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, 94 Elgin St. S. Cambridge N1R 5G5 D.V. June 11, 7-9 p.m. *Best Wishes Only.*
Fred and Corrie reside at Riverbend Place, 505-650 Coronation Blvd., Cambridge, Ontario N1R 7S6

Miscellaneous

How would you feel if you had anemia?

If you have anemia, you may experience one or more of the following symptoms:
- feel weak and tired
- look pale
- feel short of breath
- feel confused or have trouble concentrating
- have a rapid pulse
- feel dizzy or faint
- have headaches

- News Canada

Obituaries

Hoofddorp Whitby
1918 2002
"But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15
On Saturday May 11, 2002, the Lord called home our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
JANE VANDEN HEUVEL
(nee Millenaar)
at the age of 83 years. She was predeceased by her husband Marius (1987) and her great-grandsons, Albert and Alexander. We thank God for the long life He has given her and for the blessing she has been to us.
Loved by her children:
Bert & Pat Vanden Heuvel of Bracebridge, ON
David & Suzanne, Heather, John David, Heidi
Jan Vanden Heuvel of Orono, ON
Garry, Jacqui
John Vanden Heuvel of Nelson, BC
Jonathan, Jeremy, Naomi-Lina
Margaret & Andy Hiemstra of Port Perry, ON - Michelle, Stephen
Loving great-grandmother of six. She will be missed by her sister Nella VanderHeyden of Whitby, Ontario and her brother Jan Millenaar of Hoofddorp, Holland. The funeral service was held Tuesday, May 14th, at Zion Christian Reformed Church in Oshawa, Ontario.
Correspondence Address:
Margaret & Andy Hiemstra, 621 Alma St., Port Perry, ON L9L 1C5

September 6, 1925 April 18, 2002
Niewerkerk a/d Yssel Smithville
Z.H., the Neth. Ontario
Peacefully on Thursday, April 18, 2002, the Lord in His wisdom called to his eternal home
WILLIAM VAN HERK
Beloved husband of Audrey Van Herk (Griffioen). Dear father and opa of
Debbie & John Haanstra of Caistor Centre -Marsha & Joel, Ron & Sarah, Daryl, Adrian, Steven, Leanne,Karen, Daniel
Casey & Wilma Van Herk of Stoney Creek - William, Ken Jeff
Nelly & Larry Van Bergeyk of Caledonia - Sophie, Grace, Cory
Joanne & George Lindeboom of Dunnville - Jared, Nicole, Rebecca
John & Chris Van Herk of Beamsville Natalie, Stephanie
Jim & Holly Van Herk of Cambridge Dalton, Lindsay, Hayden
Survived by three sisters in the Netherlands and one brother in Australia. Funeral service was held on Monday, April 22, at the Smithville Christian Reformed Church.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. A. VanHerk, 3 Village Dr., Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Miscellaneous

In Memoriam

Consider a charitable bequest to Epilepsy Canada

EPILEPSY CANADA
1 877 SEIZURE

www.epilepsy.ca

U.S. religious freedom commission names countries it finds most repressive

Chris Herlinger

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ENI) — A U.S. government commission appointed to investigate violations of religious freedom outside the United States has claimed that repression against religious believers is worsening in a number of countries, particularly in Sudan, North Korea and Turkmenistan.

"Sadly, the situation worldwide has been growing worse," Lawrence Goodrich, a spokesman for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, told ENI following the release earlier this month of the commission's annual report.

Harsh about Sudan

The commission was established in 1998 by legislation passed by the U.S. Congress and approved by former President Bill Clinton.

In a May 6 news conference announcing the report, commission chairman Michael Young was particularly harsh in his assessment of the government of Sudan. He said that religion was a major factor in Sudan's civil war and that "religious persecution by the Khartoum regime was intertwined with other human rights and humanitarian violations in Sudan".

Among the problems cited in the report were the bombing of civilians and of humanitarian facilities; denial of international humanitarian assistance; abduction of women and children into conditions of slavery; and driving out of whole communities from oil-producing areas.

Young said that "Sudan's government continues to commit genocidal atrocities against civilian populations in the south and central parts of the country", such as the bombing in February of a World Food Program feeding centre in the western Upper Nile, and the denial in April of access for humanitarian relief flights on which almost 2 million people depend.

Noting the more prominent role that oil is taking in the Sudanese civil war, the commission recommended that Sudan's oil revenues be placed in an internationally administered trust fund. They would be spent solely for humanitarian purposes, half in the predominately Muslim north, half in the predominately Christian south.

North Koreans: 'the least free on earth'

On North Korea, Young said that religious freedom did not exist and "what little religious activity that is permitted by the government is apparently staged for foreign visitors". North Koreans were "perhaps the least free on earth, barely surviving under a totalitarian regime", he claimed.

The commission recommended that the U.S. initiate a major initiative to expose human rights abuses within North Korea and also pressure China to grant refugee status to North Koreans who cross the border into China.

On Turkmenistan, the commission described the former Soviet republic as "a state where human rights and religious freedom were severely curtailed by an authoritarian government". Only two religions, Sunni Islam and Russian Orthodoxy, Young said, were officially recognized, and even these two were highly restricted by the state.

Members of minority religious groups had been arrested, detained, tortured, imprisoned and deported, he said.

The commission urged the US government to suspend most non-humanitarian assistance to the government of Turkmenistan — though the commission did make an exception for programs that Young said served U.S. "national security interests" connected to what has been called the U.S. war on terrorism.

Some observers have questioned the impartiality of the commission.

Yvonne Haddad, a specialist in Christian-Muslim relations at Georgetown University, questioned how nations were selected for criticism by the panel and suggested that the commission applied inconsistent standards because of lobbying from US advocacy groups, Religion News Service reported.

But Goodrich defended the commission's work, telling ENI that the commission's selection of nations was fair and that, in its work, the commission met with "hundreds of religious groups" representing a broad range of faith traditions and ideologies.

Asked if the commission was concerned with a possible perception among other nations that it was a self-appointed world watchdog group, Goodrich said other countries had not made the issue of religious freedom a priority. The commission's members include academics and religious leaders representative of various religious traditions. They are appointed by the U.S. president and leaders of the U.S. Congress.

Besides Young, who was a former official in the administration of President George Bush's father and is now a dean of the George Washington University Law School in Washington, the commission includes Firuz Kazemzadeh, professor emeritus of history at Yale University and the senior advisor to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, and Richard Land, the head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

The full text of the report is available at: **www.uscirf.gov**

Defense minister says Muslims plan to wipe out Christianity

NIGERIA (Compass) — Muslim leaders aim to eradicate Christianity in northern Nigeria, says Nigeria's Defense Minister, Lt. General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma. Danjuma told a gathering of the Northern (Nigeria) Christian Elders Forum on April 20 that Christians are now under severe pressure. "Our religion is under assault in our country. If Christians are not careful, there will be a time that the propagation of the teaching of Jesus Christ will become an offense," Danjuma said. He said the only way out is for the church and its leaders to ensure that indigenous citizens of northern Nigeria are massively recruited into the pastoral ministry so that they can effectively reach their Muslim brothers with the gospel. Meanwhile, the government of Katsina state has canceled the teaching of Christian Religious Knowledge by removing its curriculum from all public primary and secondary schools, while making the teaching of Islamic Religious Knowledge compulsory. An official statement issued on April 30 stated, "The government's decision was in line with its policy of tailoring programs that are in tune with the Islamic system we envisaged."

What's stopping you from owning a (55 plus) lifestyle suite at Shalom Evergreen Terrace?

with a community not-for-profit sponsor – nothing!

Built and managed by a community based non-profit organization, all costs are budgeted at the lowest break-even point to keep costs to a minimum. Shalom Evergreen Terrace is your best value for active retirement living.

OPEN HOUSE MONDAYS
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Mountainview Church
290 Main St. E., Grimsby
905.309.7888

Shalom Evergreen Terrace

MOVE IN THIS FALL!

Church News

The **First Christian Reformed Church** of **Chilliwack, B.C.** hopes to celebrate its **50th anniversary** on Oct. 19th and 20th, 2002 D.V. All former and present members and friends are invited to help us celebrate God's faithfulness. For more information or if you need billeting, call:
Mrs. Erna Maarhuis at 604-794-7140
or e-mail: pjronda@telus.net

Event

MACS Presents
June Jitter Bug Social
Christian Singles Event
Saturday, June 8, 2002, 8 - 12 p.m.
St. Christophers Anglican Church,
662 Guelph Line, **Burlington**, Ontario
Tickets $15 at the door. Call Sandra at **905-628-6382** for more info.

Miscellaneous

Christian Salvage Mission

Is a non-profit mission organization which distributes evangelical literature worldwide. Share your surplus Christian books, Bibles and supplies. For pick-up or delivery information, contact us at: 6-120 Lancing Dr., Hamilton, ON Canada L8W 3A1
905-574-3334
csm01@on.aibn.com

Job Opportunities

A **Guelph construction company** has an immediate opening for an experienced **framing carpenter.** We frame only custom homes and seek an individual who prides oneself in quality workmanship. The carpenter we seek must be a self-starter with leadership capabilities, a clean driving record and enough experience to be trained to lead a framing crew starting in 4 to 6 months. Please fax or e-mail to Mark's attention a resume with specific details of your framing and construction experience. Also include two references and your wage expectations.
Fax: 519-821-1297
E-mail: info@rammik.on.ca

CARPET INSTALLER - If you are an experienced carpet and flooring installer or an apprentice and looking for a change of scenery, give us a call. We have an immediate opening for a qualified installer who is interested in working with fellow Christians in a long established family business. Contact Richard at **Hamstra Carpet One**, Strathroy, ON
Ph: 519-245-1752 Fax: 519-245-2660
E-mail hamstra@execulink.com

For Rent

St. Catharines: Basement bachelor in quite home close to Fairview Mall and Maranatha Church. Private bath and shared entrance. $450/mo. inclusive. Available Sep. or sooner. For more info, call Ria at 905-383-5848

Classifieds

Job Opportunities

Development Director
Position available 2002 - 2003 school year. **1 year 20 % position**
Jarvis District Christian School is looking for a person with strong Public Relation skills to promote our school to the Christian community. For more information on qualifications, job description, responsibilities and salary, please contact the school at 519-587-4444 or e-mail.
Please forward your resume to:
Jarvis District Christian School,
PO Box 520, Jarvis, ON N0A 1,1J0
E-mail at jdcs@kwic.com

For Rent

Georgian Shores Cottage is now renting. Fully **furnished lakefront** cottage that sleeps 8. Located on Georgian Bay in the heart of the Georgian Triangle tourist area. Visit our web page at www.bmts.com/~gregayrh/ to see pictures and learn more about Georgian Shores. New low rate of $550/wk, $50 less is booked before June15. For info: **519-538-5581** or: **gregayrh@bmts.com**

Bed & Breakfast

Visiting the Niagara Peninsula? Stay for a night or more at:
"Travellers Home Bed & Breakfast"
2666 Eighth Avenue,
Vineland, ON L0R 1S0
Call **905-562-5656** for more info.
All ensuite rooms.
Also motorhome for rent.
www.jdnet.nl/travellershome

Traveling through Northern Ontario? We have a **cedar log cabin** available for rent in **Cochrane**. For more info, please call 705-272-6169, or e-mail us at geoadail@puc.net

Miscellaneous

To advertise in *Christian Courier*, call our toll-free number: 1-800-969-4838.

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Travel

DCA Travel & Cruise
E-mail: dcatravl@istar.ca
Holiday Packages-Cruises-Flights
ON SALE
TORONTO 416-224-5211
BRADFORD 905-775-6763
Toll Free 1-800-667-2525
Call today - Free delivery at home

Job Opportunities

MUTUAL SUPPORT, a non-profit, parent-model, Christian agency providing residential foster care for children in the Niagara region invites applications for the full-time position of:

House Parent(s)

To fulfill our program philosophy of providing care for at-risk children in a setting that closely replicates a healthy family unit, this is an ideal position for a married couple that wishes to make a serious commitment to helping children that are in long-term care. More than a job, this is a lifestyle choice that can include working alongside your partner in a home-like setting.
Successful candidates would demonstrate an ability to implement Mutual Support's philosophy and Policies, and adhere to its core program values. Applicants should be able to demonstrate their commitment to working with children through previous educational paths, bodies of experience, volunteerism, or ministries to children.
A competitive salary is paid to each spouse.
Applicants may apply in writing, including a resume and cover letter to:
Randy Klassen
Associate Director –
Human Resources
Fenwick, ON LO8 1C0
For information , call **905 892-4332**
Please visit our web site at
http://www.mutualsupport.net

mutual SUPPORT

REDEEMER
University College

invites applications for the position of

Assistant Director of Financial Aid

Responsibility is given for managing the operation of the Financial Aid Office. This includes providing training, support, and coordinating and supervising the work of Financial Aid staff who are responsible for counselling applicants and students, providing relevant, requested information for their sponsors, and promoting and administering various award programs.
Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree and work experience in college / university recruitment or financial aid.

Please direct inquiries to the
Human Resources Director
Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East
Ancaster, ON
L9K 1J4

Tel: 905-648-2131 x4230
Applicants are encouraged to fax or email their application materials.
FAX: 905-648-2134
email: jvgeest@redeemer.on.ca

All serious replies are appreciated. However, only candidates invited for interviews will be contacted.

Miscellaneous

access.

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES
Christian Graduate Education
www.icscanada.edu

Low interest rates getting you down?
If you are over 65, have you considered the attractive rates, tremendous tax savings, and support of your favourite charities with a gift annuity?
Sample rates: Male 70 7.2% totally tax free! for life!
Male 80 10% tax free for life and
a small one-time tax receipt. Female rates somewhat lower.
Joint rates for two persons available. Link Charity Canada, a newcomer, is sponsored by Partners International, Voice of the Martyrs, In Touch Ministries, Operation Eyesight and Emmanuel International. Write, call or fax for a confidential and no-obligation quotation.
Phone 416-410-4244, Fax 416-465-6367
45 Harriet St. Toronto M4L 2G1

Travel

LUNCH IS ON US!

Book your Martinair or KLM flight to Europe and receive **10 Euro's** per person

Offer valid until June 30, some restrictions apply

Valentine Travel Service
905-890-5333 or 800-268-6144
in London call 519-472-2700/800-265-1141

Miscellaneous

***Christian Courier* helps Christians across North America apply their living faith to the business of living. Your donation to Reformed Faith Witness supports this ministry. Along with our thanks for your cheque, we'll send you a tax receipt for donations of $10 (Cdn.) or more. Our address is: *Christian Courier*, 4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

June 1,2 Williamsburg CRC 50th anniversary, **Williamsburg**, Ont. See ad in this issue.

June 1,2 Mount Hamilton CRC, **Hamilton, Ont.** 50th Anniversary Open house & special worship. Call 905-383-8315 or visit **www.mthamiltoncrc.org**

June 7 Retirement – Bernie Kruiselbrink – **Chatham** Chr. School See ad this issue.

June 9 Mountainview **CRC, Grimsby, Ont.** 40th anniversary service and fellowship at 10 a.m. See ad this issue.

June 12 **Hollandse Dag** 10 uur in de **Moorefield** Community Center. See ad this issue.

June 15 **Spring of Hope Concert,** Wine Tour, Dinner & Concert at Stonechurch Vineyards in **Niagara –on-the-Lake** and featuring the Ambassador Chr. Male Chorus. **Proceeds to Niagara Warehouse of Hope** and Chr. Ref. World Mission (**water & medical projects in Nigeria**) For Reservations & tickets: **905-935-3535**

June 15,16 CRC **St. Thomas, Ont**. celebrating 50th anniversary with picnic and service. Info: Jan Vandergeest 519-631-5285 or e-mail: jan@gtn.on.ca

June 15 **Gunneger Picnic,** starting anytime before lunch, Grand River Conservation Auth. Park, **Rockwood**, Ont. Auth charges admissiion fee but picnic free. For information, **phone 1-519-235-0719**

June 19 **Hollandse Dag** 10 a.m. First CRC 310 Kingscourt Av. **Kingston**, Ont. Speaker: Jim Kooistra, Topic: "Bloeien in de beste jaren" For info call 613-546-5615

June 22, 23 Blenheim CRC, **Blenhein, Ont**. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner, social, and worship. Call 519-352- 1772 or 519-674-2171 for info.

June22, 23 Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge**. Retirement celebration. Pastor Ralph & Anne Koops. See ad in this issue.

July 13,14 Lindsay CRC, **Lindsay, Ont**. celebrating 50th anniversary with dinner and service. Call :705-328- 0177 Fax:705-328-3156 or E-mail: lawilms@sympatico.ca

Aug 24 **Clinton** & District Christian School **40th year reunion**. For information on events, call 519-482-7851.See ad

Oct 19,20 First CRC of **Chilliwack B.C. 50th** anniversary For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail pjonda@telus.net See ad this issue.

FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
of **Thunder Bay, Ontario** (established in 1950)
is prayerfully **seeking a pastor** through whose ministry we would be nurtured spiritually at all age levels, in order to equip us for outreach and challenge us to focus on our vision and fulfil our mission. We are a caring congregation of 120 families made up of 475 members, We are located close to an excellent Christian School (K-10). There are two sister churches and a Community Outreach Centre, sponsored by the three local Christian Reformed Churches. If you feel led to respond to our need of a pastor, we invite you to please contact us for our church profile. Please direct your inquiries to:

Mr. D. Kaemingk,
Chairperson of the Pastor Search Committee
205-110 Hill St.
Kakabeka Falls, ON POT 1W0
Phone: (807) 473-5717; if busy (807) 935-5735
E-mail: derk@tbaytel.net

After 36 years of teaching,
BERNIE KRUISSELBRINK
has indicated his desire to retire.
Former colleagues, past students, and friends are invited to celebrate Bernie's years of service to the **Chatham Christian School** in a special retirement evening.
WHEN: Friday, June 7, 2002 at 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Chatham Christian School
475 Keri Drive South
Chatham, Ontario
If you wish to contribute in any way to this celebration please call **John Van Pelt** at the school, **519-352-4980**.

Miscellaneous

We could really use your investment now.

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

CRC EXTENSION FUND
"... serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

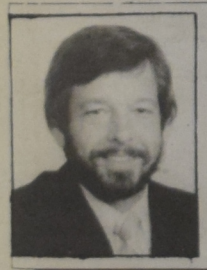
RATES TO JUNE 30, 2002:
RRSP approx.: 3.55 %
Ext. Fund: 3.5 %
call: 416-461-1207
write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1
fax: 416-465-6367

Help to support Christian journalism!

Christian Courier **is a ministry of Reformed Faith Witness. All gifts of $10 or more are tax-deductible and will receive an official receipt. Please make cheques payable to: Reformed Faith Witness, and send to: 4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

ADA REALTY LTD.
2011-137 Ave., Suite 404
Edmonton, AB
T5A 4W2
780-473-8149
Sid Vandermeulen
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
Home of confidence

40 years of "Shining Like Star"
Clinton and District Christian School
August 24th, 2002
Mini-reunions, Barbecue Social & Evening Program
17 month commemorative calendar available to order.
Call 519-482-7851 or 519-482-9709 for more information, to reserve dinner tickets & to order calendar before July 26th.
Please tell your friends, neighbours & relatives!



Arie Hoogerbrugge
Associate Broker
RE/MAX Del Mar Realty Inc.
840 Queenston Road
Stoney Creek, ON L8G 4A8
Bus: 905-662-5300
Fax: 905-664-2300

Miscellaneous

Psalter Hymnals falling apart?

Don't buy replacements, recycle them. We can rebind almost any book for a fraction of the cost of new, and the rebound books will last much longer than the original binding. Why not send us one of your church's hymnals or bibles and we will rebind it at no charge, just to show you how good your old books can look. Send your sample request on church letterhead with the item for binding.

Limit one sample per church. Normal price for quantities of five or more $7.50. We rebind and restore all types of books, including personal and family Bibles.

Wallaceburg Bookbinding
1-800-214-BIND
95 Arnold Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 3P3

The Bible and Islam

by Rev. Bassam Madany

($5.95 Canada/$4.95 U.S.)
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind.
Also available — essays on Understanding the Middle East ($1.50).
Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y8

Miscellaneous

Burlington, Ontario

Maranatha Homes

This award-winning Senior Citizen Homes is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation.
Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income.

Information from:
Rosanne van der Woerd, 3260 New Street
Burlington, ON L7N 3L4 905-639-9054

News

Biochip raises ethical concerns

Alan Doerksen

A new computer biochip has been invented which can be implanted in people just under the skin, to provide medical and other information when activated with a scanner. Called VeriChip, it is causing concern among some Christians because of the possibilities of misusing it, and because some see it as being similar to the "mark of the beast" mentioned in the book of Revelation.

APPLIED DIGITAL SOLUTIONS WEBSITE PHOTO

The Verichip: a veritable ethical dilemma.

Applied Digital Solutions (ADS), an American technology development company based in Palm Beach, Fla., first announced the VeriChip last Dec. 19. About the size of a grain of rice, the chip is a miniaturized radio frequency identification device, which can be used in a variety of security, emergency and healthcare situations, states ADS on its website.

On April 4, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) told the company it does not consider the VeriChip to be a regulated medical device. This gives ADS freedom to start marketing and sales of the chip in the U.S.

The chip has no power source, but is activated by an external scanner, which passes radio frequency energy through the skin, activating the chip, which then sends out a radio signal containing a verification number. That number is used to access data in a secure storage site, available by telephone or the Internet, reports ADS.

Implanting the VeriChip can be performed easily in a doctor's office, with local anaesthetic, a tiny incision and a small bandage.

One application for the chip, says ADS, is to provide a ready source of information about pacemakers and other medical devices in a patient's body. A chip implanted above such a device could provide information about it, as well as the patient's name and medical condition.

Information provided by biochip users will be stored in a registry database. Only information authorized by the subscriber will be available for access via VeriChip's scanner, asserts ADS. Registry participants will pay a monthly subscription fee, enabling them to include and change pertinent information in the database. Healthcare clinics, hospitals, search and rescue units will also have access to this information — if they subscribe to it.

The chip will cost about $200 U.S., and the scanner between $1,000 and $3,000.

Such radio-activated chips are already used to track cattle, house pets and salmon, reports Reuters. But this is the first attempt to apply this technology to humans.

Theologian and author Terry Cook is one person who worries the biochip could be the "mark of the beast" — an identifying mark that all people will be forced to wear before the end times, reports AP.

Questioning the value

Bioethics professor Hessel Bouma, of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich, questions the value of the VeriChip. "The question is: is it voluntary or mandatory?" he asks. "What kind of information can be put on a biochip? Who has access to that information?" Would teachers, employers, or insurance agencies have access? If so, that information could be used against an individual.

If someone cannot choose what information is put on a biochip, it could be harmful, Bouma observes. People should not have power to change information on a chip, or else "it could lead to some very serious problems," he asserts.

"Will the military require all people in the military to have a biochip?" If so, the chip could take the place of a military "dogtag". "It would be harder to steal someone's identity with a biochip," Bouma notes.

Potential benefits

Bouma sees some potential benefits in the biochip. For instance, such a chip could help to find and identify an Alzheimer's patient, so that they could be found and brought to a safe location. And for someone with a serious medical condition, "in an accident where they are incapacitated, a biochip could be helpful." The chip could contain information to help someone get the best medical treatment.

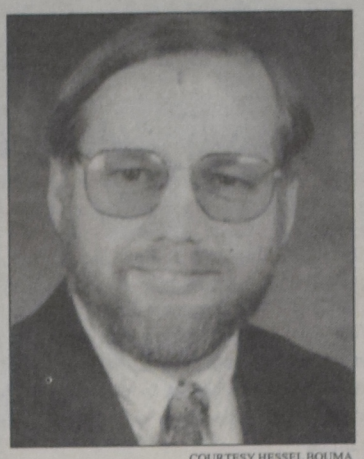
Another possible use for the chip could be to identify bodies of people who die in plane crashes.

Some Christians see the biochip as "the mark of the beast," connected with accounts of the Antichrist in the book of Revelation. Bouma comments, "There are always individuals who see any changes as a threat" and see them as "exclusively evil." But Bouma believes "we need moral discernment" on this issue.

Invasion of body

Gary Chiang, professor of biology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., sees little value in the biochip. He acknowledges that some people might see the device as being like "the mark of the beast." But that is "what I would consider fear-mongering," he asserts. Other devices such as credit cards could be seen in a similar light.

Chiang objects to the biochip for several reasons. "I'm not keen on technology working all the time," he says. A better solution for emergency medical information is a medic-alert bracelet, he observes. Also, "there's nothing better than having a good doctor who knows what he's doing."



COURTESY HESSEL BOUMA

Bioethics professor Hessel Bouma

"I'd not like something to be inserted in me..." He sees the chip as "an invasion of your body."

Chiang notes that the biochip "may not be convenient because you need the apparatus to read the chip" — which is not cheap. It would be "simply a record of your medical history."

Another disadvantage is that some people would want to keep certain medical conditions, such as venereal disease, a secret, and the chip might prevent that.

The chips could also break down, and stop working. They could also be used in unethical ways.

For the company that produces the biochip, it could be "a big money-maker," Chiang observes. The only value Chiang sees in the chip is that it could monitor medical conditions in a patient, such as blood pressure.

Digital Angel

In addition to the VeriChip, ADS is also helping develop a system called Digital Angel, which uses wristwatch-like sensors to monitor key body functions in patients — such as temperature and pulse — and transmits that data, along with accurate emergency location information, to a ground station or monitoring facility, via a global positioning system.

The company has already moved beyond medical use of Digital Angel, and has won a three-year trial contract with the state of California to supply a version of the product that would track paroled prisoners in Los Angeles, and alert authorities when they had violated their parole terms by leaving a set area, reports Reuters.

Extremists call for extermination of Muslims, Christians

INDIA (Compass) — Shocking slogans have surfaced on the walls of Ahmedabad, Gujarat state's capital city and economic centre, calling for the ethnic cleansing of Christians after Muslims have been wiped out.

Gujarat, which has gained worldwide infamy as India's "laboratory of fascist Hinduism," is embroiled in communal riots that have claimed more than 2,000 lives, mostly from the minority communities. Since the riots began in early March, Christians have been living in fear along with their Muslim neighbors. On April 22, students appearing for their Class 12 state-run board examinations were horrified to find grammar questions with direct reference to Nazism implicitly targeting Christians. Atul Setalvad, a prominent Mumbai lawyer, said, "The last 10 years have seen a consistent, organized campaign of hate against Christians and Muslims in Gujarat."

News Digest

Bachelor's & black belt

BRIDGEPORT, Connecticut (AP) — The University of Bridgeport is considering offering a bachelor's degree that would come with a diploma and a black belt. The school may become the first outside of Korea to offer a degree in martial arts, said University President Neil Salonen.

"We're trying to position the university to distinguish itself where it's not competing but actually distinctive," Salonen told the *Connecticut Post*. "People will know UB as putting up some cutting edge proposals." The proposal is still at least a year away from being presented to the state, Salonen said.

The major would give students their fourth-degree black belt in one of several martial arts disciplines. Students who get such a degree would be qualified to teach, referee or coach martial arts, and even open their own martial arts school.

Generation XXL

TORONTO — People are already calling kids between the ages of six and 19 "Generation XXL," an uncomfortable jab at what health experts call an epidemic of obesity, reports the *Denver Post*.

"We've dieted for years and years," says obesity researcher Jim Hill, "and the only thing that's successful in weight loss is increasing physical exercise."

Scientists at Colorado State University (CSU) have been using pedometers to teach 50 Grade 2 students about nutrition and exercise. Recently, they offered the children a choice of snacks: apple slices or a piece of chocolate. After the youngsters had eaten, the researchers told them, "Okay, now the apple group will take 400 steps to work off their snack, and the kids who chose chocolate will take 800 steps." Laughing at the memory of the shocked little faces, CSU's Françoise Hill said, "Believe me, after that those kids remembered."

Chubby pets

TORONTO — Speaking of extra-large, one of every two pets in the U.S. is overweight, reports the *Chicago Tribune*. Their obesity mirrors the problems — overeating and lack of exercise — that Americans themselves face.

"Yes, even fish can be overweight," reports the *Tribune*. "They can be exercised by giving them a larger tank and more room to swim around."